South Haven Tribune

$3

March 22, 2026

SOUTH BEACH

Photos by Julie Newell / Tribune Editor

The current beach parking fee in South Haven is $10 per day, unless the car has a parking sticker.

SH considers hourly rate for beach parking

City council eyes alternate funding for lifeguard program

By JULIE NEWELL
SH Tribune Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — South Haven is considering changing the beach parking fees to $3 per hour to help fund the lifeguard program.

The South Haven City Council met for a Committee of a Whole session Monday to discuss the funding options for the lifeguard program. The current beach parking fee is $10 per day, unless the car has a parking sticker.

In 2024, there were 47,440 daily passes purchased at $10 a piece, which resulted in $474,400 from the daily passes only.

"How much is a lifeguard program going to cost?" Director of Information Technology Phil Poole asked the council. "We're getting right now between $6,000 and $7,000 at least the first year, so how do we make that up?"

CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN
PAY BY PLATE PARKING
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3. PAY FEE AT PAY STATION

South Haven is considering changing the beach parking fees to help fund the lifeguard program.

The first option is to have the parking fee move to a hourly rate, instead of a daily fee. The fee would be $3 per hour and the weekly passes would increase from $30 to $50.

"We don't have hard numbers on what it's going to be for (the) hourly (rate)," Poole said. "But based on if all the spaces are full 80 percent of the time, $3 per hour would give us that $1.3 million."

The second option is to extend the beach hours to be open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., with a $2 per hour parking rate.

"I don't think that the $3 is unreasonable," Council Member Tom Capps said. "My viewpoint would be to do the $3 and leave the times alone so that people can park and see the sunset way ahead of time if they want to."

Council Member Mary Hosley brought up the concern that this change would push more people to park in the neighborhood to avoid the parking fees.

"It's totally possible," Poole said. "Like I said, we don't know what people are going to do in response to this. They may do that and we'd have to react to that next year at this point, but my belief is most of the people who are here are tourists; tourists expect to pay the money to come and visit beaches."

Poole also proposed an increase to parking fines from the current $20 to $45.

"Many of our visitors find it

See **PARKING**, page A2

South Haven to allow multiple officeholding

By JULIE NEWELL
SH Tribune Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven City Council approved an ordinance this week to amend the code of ordinances to allow a single person to hold multiple offices.

This ordinance stems from having a limited number of individuals available in serving on boards and commissions.

During Monday's meeting, Council Member Mary Hosley said there have been many applicants for the planning commission, which included her in 2021.

"Since then, there have always been more applicants than there have been for the number of seats open on (the) planning commission," Hosley said.

Council Member Tom Capps said the planning commission can be complicated and applicants have to be qualified to serve on that commission.

"Just because you have applicants doesn't mean they're qualified to do the job," Capps said.

Council Member Laticia Wilkins asked what the qualifications were to be on the planning commission.

"We have to be transparent," Wilkins said. "If we're going to come up with these rules, randomly, then for the community there should be something listed, for the people, saying this is what qualifies you to be on planning."

City Attorney Dave Eberle said the Planning and Enabling Act has the criteria for planning commission members listed, but is more for general guidance.

"This is my second time serving on council, representing Ward 2, and the first time that I served we would have council meetings and no one would be here," Council Member Jeff Arnold said. "We would have appointments for boards and no one would apply, so much so we had to remove the term limits. Now, we are lucky that the pendulum has swung

See **COUNCIL**, page A2

SH school board considers eighth-grade reproductive class

By JULIE NEWELL
SH Tribune Editor

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven school board discussed adding a miniature reproductive course for eighth-grade classes only.

During Wednesday's meeting, Curriculum Director and North Shore Elementary School Principal Carey Frost presented the proposal for the course to be two, half-hour classes at the end of the school year for the eighth-grade students to review what they learned in the seventh-grade reproductive class before they enter high school. The mini course would also add a discussion on birth control.

"So, they have a bigger reproductive health course in seventh grade and they don't take it again until high school and some of them don't take it their freshman year," Frost said. "What we're adding to this is birth control discussion, which ... we're abstinence based in middle school and we don't talk about birth control in seventh grade."

Parents would be informed ahead of time and have the option to opt their child out of the mini course.

The item will be voted on

See **BOARD**, page A3

Fire engulfs A&D One Stop in South Haven causing extensive damage

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — A southside commercial establishment in South Haven was extensively damaged by fire on Thursday morning.

According to a news release, South Haven Area Emergency Services responded to a report of a structure fire at the A&D One Stop, located at 883 Indiana Ave., at 8:20 a.m Thursday.

A&D One Stop is a neighborhood convenience store that has been located at the southside location for several years.

"Firefighters arrived to find heavy smoke and fire coming from the attic," the release stated. "A second alarm brought Bangor Community and Covert Township firefighters to the scene."

The business was not open at the time and the owner reported being in the building 30 minutes before the alarm.

A nearby, attached short-term rental suffered smoke damage, but was saved from the flames.

First-responders said the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

The South Haven Police Department and South Haven Board of Public Works assisted at the scene.

South Haven convenience store A&D One Stop suffered damage after a fire started in the store's attic Thursday morning.

Photos provided / Tom Renner

South Haven Area Emergency Services respond to a report of a structure fire at the A&D One Stop in South Haven on Thursday morning.

The Tribune: Celebrating Our 127th Year

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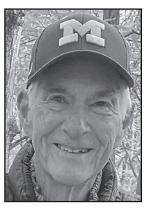
OBITUARIES

Donald Dezelsky

April 23, 1935 – Feb. 27, 2026



Donald Lee Dezelsky passed away peacefully at home on Friday, Feb. 27 with his loving wife by his side following a short battle with cancer. Born April 23, 1935 in Saginaw, Mich. to Julius and Gladys (Burr) Dezelsky, he was one of four children.

In 1996 he married Mary Skipper Morgan and they enjoyed 30 wonderful years together.

Don was a man whose love of God, family and friends was evident through his daily living. A good listener, his warm and welcoming manner quickly put others at ease while his kind humor and ready smile encouraged friends and family alike. He was a man of strong yet gentle faith. Don didn't preach, rather he lived his faith through actions and love. He didn't judge, instead he found the good in others and encouraged that goodness. Whether teaching, coaching, driving cancer patients or driving for Senior Services, building ramps, or doing building projects, this generous man served his community and impacted numerous lives.

As a young man, Don worked with his Dad building houses during summer vacations. After spending numerous summers polishing those skills, he in turn passed that knowledge on to his kids and even tried with a couple grandkids. He did numerous building projects with family and friends working alongside him. Those skills and knowledge proved invaluable when he served on our church's property committee for several years.

He supported, encouraged, accepted, and respected all he met. He loved in a quiet and gentle way. As a good friend of his said, "He is a man so easy to love"... and so many did.

The Detroit Tigers held a special place for Don and he cheered them on during a 2006 World Series game in Comerica Park. A dedicated fan, his love for baseball began as a boy playing sandlot games with his brother Tom. He went on to play for Western Michigan University Broncos and coached 27 years at Muskegon Mona Shores until his teaching retirement in 1990. In 1987 he was inducted into the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Don and his son Jon cheered together for the Detroit Lions and Michigan Wolverines and of course, the Tigers.

When not coaching or watching baseball, he enjoyed playing the links with good friends and family. He was rewarded with three hole-in-ones, two of them in the same year. Playing cards, especially cribbage, generated laughter and legendary moments at family gatherings and no matter the age of his opponents, he loved to skunk them.

Great memories were made as Don and his family camped throughout the United States. He eventually visited all 50 states as well as numerous foreign countries. The southwest was a favorite area of travel for Don and Mary with Utah number one. Hiking Angel's Landing in Zion NP proved to be a rewarding and highly memorable endeavor. His favorite trip was a monthlong excursion to Africa where they shared two weeks on a safari. Several trips to Europe with family and good friends enriched their experiences.

Don's greatest blessing was his large family. In addition to his wife, Mary, he will be greatly missed by children, Jean (Joe) Snowden, Joan (Bob) Amon, Jane (Joel) Sydlowski, Jon (Megan) Dezelsky, Jennifer (Cory) Graves, and Stephen (Alysia) Morgan; he was also blessed with wonderful grandchildren, Jennifer (Nico), Joe (Raquel), Jillyn (Earl), Loree (Ian), Jori, Justin (Siera), Jake, Jenna, Madison, Evan Catherine, Leah, Connor, and Deniella; 8 great grandchildren; and sisters, Janice Jaynes and Julie (Bob) Fhuere;

He was preceded by his brother, Tom (Ann Ludwig) Dezelsky and they're together again on Heaven's ball field.

A celebration of life will be held at noon on Saturday, April 11, 2026 at Hope Church, 1365 Monroe Blvd, South Haven, MI 49090. Visitation will take place at 11 a.m. with a luncheon served immediately following the service.

In honor of Don's heart for young people and his faith, contributions may be made to Hope Church Youth Program.

Betty Dykstra

March 31, 1933 – March 5, 2026

Lifelong South Haven resident Betty Dykstra, 92, died peacefully on Thursday, March 5, 2026, in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Betty was born to the late Irene (Hinz) and Otto W. Laabs Sr. on March 31, 1933. She graduated from South Haven High School in 1950 and married Gordon Dykstra on Nov. 10, 1951.

Betty and Gordon raised four children and welcomed 9 grandchildren over their 57 years of marriage before Gordon's death on Dec. 21, 2008.

Betty is survived by three of those children: Karen (Mike) Verdonk; Keith (Tammy) Dykstra; and Kyle Teichow. Also surviving are grandchildren Adam Dykstra; Trevor (Nicole) Dykstra; Jenna (Brian) Kietzerow; Eric Dykstra; Jordan Verdonk; Jarred (Bridgett) Dykstra; Emily (Kent) Morris; Rebecca (Juan Marmolejo) Dykstra; and Molly Teichow. Betty also considered Miguel Angel Lasso, originally a family friend, her 10th grandchild. She was "RiRi" to her 16 great-grandchildren. Many nieces, nephews and cousins will also miss her presence.

Betty will join her infant son Douglas, son Kenneth, sister Johanna Carlock, and brother Otto W. Laabs Jr., who preceded her in death.

Betty was always very active in Peace Lutheran Church, where she served in the Priscilla Circle, The Loyals, and the choir. The South Haven Hospital Auxiliary was also an important place of service and socializing for many years as a "Pink Lady". In more recent years, Betty enjoyed watching sunsets at the lake, going to The Groovin' Grove to listen to music and spending time with her family.

A visitation will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 28 followed by a celebration of life service at noon at Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Haven. Following the service her cremains will be placed in Peace Memorial Garden in a private family ceremony.

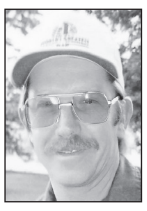
Memorial gifts may be given to Peace Evangelical Church or Al-Van Humane Society in honor of Betty.

Those wishing to share a memory of Betty may do so at www.starksfamilyfh.com.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Filbrandt Chapel-Starks Family Funeral Homes and Cremation Services 269-637-0333.

Paul Warskow

Sept. 5, 1958 – Feb. 18, 2026



Paul Louis Warskow, 67, of South Haven, Mich. passed away Feb. 18, 2026, in South Haven. Paul was born in South Haven on Sept. 5, 1958, to the late Louis Albert Warskow and Eleanor Geiger Warskow.

There will be a time of sharing and visitation with the family from 1 to 3 p.m. on July 3, 2026 at Filbrandt Chapel, 1076 S. Bailey, South Haven, MI. Paul will be cremated and laid to rest at Lakeview Cemetery, South Haven.

Paul is survived by three children: Beth A. (Craig) Lewis, Kristen M. (Thomas) Warskow-Musolino and Duane K. (Sara) Finley. Also surviving are two grandchildren: Michelle A. (Westley) Lewis-Kalinowski and Kyle D. Lewis.

Prior to retirement, Paul worked mostly as a mechanic on agriculture machinery at Getman Corp., Campbell's Mushroom Farm, Dailey's Blueberry Farm, among others.

Paul enjoyed spending time gardening, tinkering, building and dreaming up wild ways to modify and repurpose things. His inventive solutions will always be remembered by those closest to him.

Memorial donations may be made to the South Haven Jay Dee's 4-H.

Paul and family believe fiercely in the benefits of civic engagement and agriculture in our local and global communities.

Checks can be made payable to: South Haven Jay Dee's 4-H Club and mailed to:

MSU Extension
ATTN: South Haven Jay Dee's 4-H Club
57418 COUNTY ROAD 681, Suite A
Hartford, MI 49057

Those wishing to share a memory of Paul online may do so at www.starksfamilyfh.com.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Filbrandt Chapel-Starks Family Funeral Homes and Cremation Services, 269-637-0333.

Michael Boeskool

Feb. 28, 1965 – March 16, 2026

Michael Allen Boeskool, 61 of Lacota, Mich. passed away at Bronson Hospital on Monday, March 16, 2026. Born on Feb. 28, 1965 in Fremont, Mich. to Richard and Roseann Boeskool.

Michael is survived by his son Brandon Boeskool of Lacota, one grandchild, one great-grandchild and brothers; Christopher (Terri) Boeskool of Lindenhurst, Ill. and Shawn (Maggie) Boeskool of Shelbyville, Mich.

Michael was preceded in death by his parents Richard and Roseann Boeskool.

Michael graduated from L.C. Mohr High School in 1983. He worked on the family farm and drove truck for several companies throughout his life.

When not working he enjoyed watching NCIS and was a big NASCAR fan, watching many races. He mainly loved spending time with his family and friends.

A celebration of life will be planned for a later date.

In lieu of flowers, it is being requested that donations be made to South Haven Nursing and Rehab in South Haven, Mich.

To those who choose to leave a memory or condolence go to www.starksfamilyfh.com.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Filbrant Chapel-Starks Family Funeral Homes and Cremation Services. 269-637-0333.

PARKING

From page A1

more convenient to park on the lawn and just pay the $20 than it is to pay the parking fee," Poole said.

If the parking fees change, City Manager Kate Hosier said the three-year parking passes would still be valid.

"This parking memorandum is only for the daily and weekly (fees)," Hosier said. "We are not addressing the three-year annual permit because we still have one more year on that."

Poole said they are working on a possible residential parking program to replace the parking stickers in the future.

"We do have a plan for the future of what may happen with those (parking passes)," Poole said. "And that'll be talking about potentially residential parking program rather than having the stickers, we could have residents, at first probably come into City Hall and register their vehicles."

The residential parking program could also have an online portal where residents could also register the vehicles of their visitors. If this program is developed, city officials said the weekly passes would be removed and no longer be available.

Poole said this is still in the discussion stage, but he hopes to have a plan by next year.

The council came to a consensus that the first option to change the parking fees to $3 per hour would be the best option for city officials to work toward.

The subject will be brought to a later city council meeting to be discussed further and voted on.

Contact: jnewell@southhaventribune.com, 269-637-1104

COUNCIL

From page A1

the other way and we have plenty of people interested in the planning commission, and thankfully, we have plenty people in the audience and people watching from home, but if the pendulum goes back the other way, I don't want to hamstring us."

Short-term rentals

City council also approved an amendment to the code of ordinances to allow for short-term rentals to become conditionally registered by Dec. 31.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Kelly Getman-Dissette said in the March 1 council meeting that city staff is only 20 percent done with the current applications and will not be able to get the rest done by the May 1 deadline.

This proposed amendment would issue a conditional license for up to two years to the property owners if they were a registered short-term rental as of March 17, 2025, and they submitted all the necessary documents and fees.

The conditional license is a way for the short-term rental owners to continue renting while also giving the staff members time to finish the applications and do the necessary inspections before a regular license is issued.

Once conditionally licensed, the application process remains the same as initially announced in August of 2025 and the required zoning compliance determination and inspections will be completed.

If the short-term rental does not meet the inspection or the zoning compliance determination, the conditional license would be terminated.

The amendment also removes the insurance indemnification provision.

Other items

City council held a public hearing and approved a Payment of Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with Dwelling Place.

The agreement is a requirement for the application for funding the Overton project from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

City council approved a letter of support for the Overton Redevelopment Project for Dwelling Place's application to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

City council approved two special events including:

- National Day of Prayer to be held from noon to 1 p.m. on May 7 at the southern entrance and lawn of City Hall.
- Via Crucis to be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on April 3 around St. Basil's Church and along Monroe Boulevard between the church and Kid's Corner Park.

Contact: jnewell@southhaventribune.com, 269-637-1104

Al-Van Humane Society
Adopt ♥ Volunteer ♥ Donate ♥ Advocate
73303 8th Ave. PO Box 421 South Haven, MI 49090
phone 269.637.5062 fax 269.639.2242
Mon, Tue, Thurs, Fri 11 am to 5:30 pm; Sat 11 am to 3 pm; Wed, Sun Closed

Meet our Pet of the Week, Dublin!

Looking for a little extra luck this St. Patrick's Day? Dublin might just be your lucky charm. This 1-year-old Border Collie mix is packed with personality, brains, and a love for playtime. When the fun winds down, he's more than happy to soak up some well-earned attention and affection. If you're searching for a clever, fun-loving companion to bring a little extra joy into your days, Dublin might just be your pot of gold. You can submit an adoption survey at al-van.org/adopt.

Next Microchip Clinic

Keep your pet safe all year long! Sign-up today for Al-Van Humane Society's next quarterly microchip clinic on March 28th from 12pm-2pm at Decadent Dogs. Give your pet a lifetime of security and peace of mind for you for just $25 per pet. Drop in anytime during clinic hours. No appointment required. For more information visit al-van.org/microchipping or call (269)637-5062.

THIS WEEK'S WISH LIST

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One injured, one arrested in shooting near I-94

Police respond to shooting at rest area near Watervliet Twp.

By TRIBUNE STAFF

WATERVLIET — A man was injured and another was taken into custody in connection to a shooting Monday night at a rest area along westbound I-94 in Watervliet Township.

According to a news release, the Berrien County Sheriff's Office said the shooting happened just before 7:15 p.m. Monday during the snowstorm that hit Berrien County, at the rest area in Watervliet Township.

When police arrived, they found a 34-year-old man from Perry who had been shot. He was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

Police said a 26-year-old man from Kalamazoo was booked into the Berrien County Jail on shooting-related charges.

Police have not identified the suspect or the victim as of Tuesday.

The shooting remains under investigation.

The Berrien County Sheriff's Office was assisted at the scene by the Watervliet Police Department, Coloma Township Police Department, Michigan State Police and Medic 1 Ambulance.

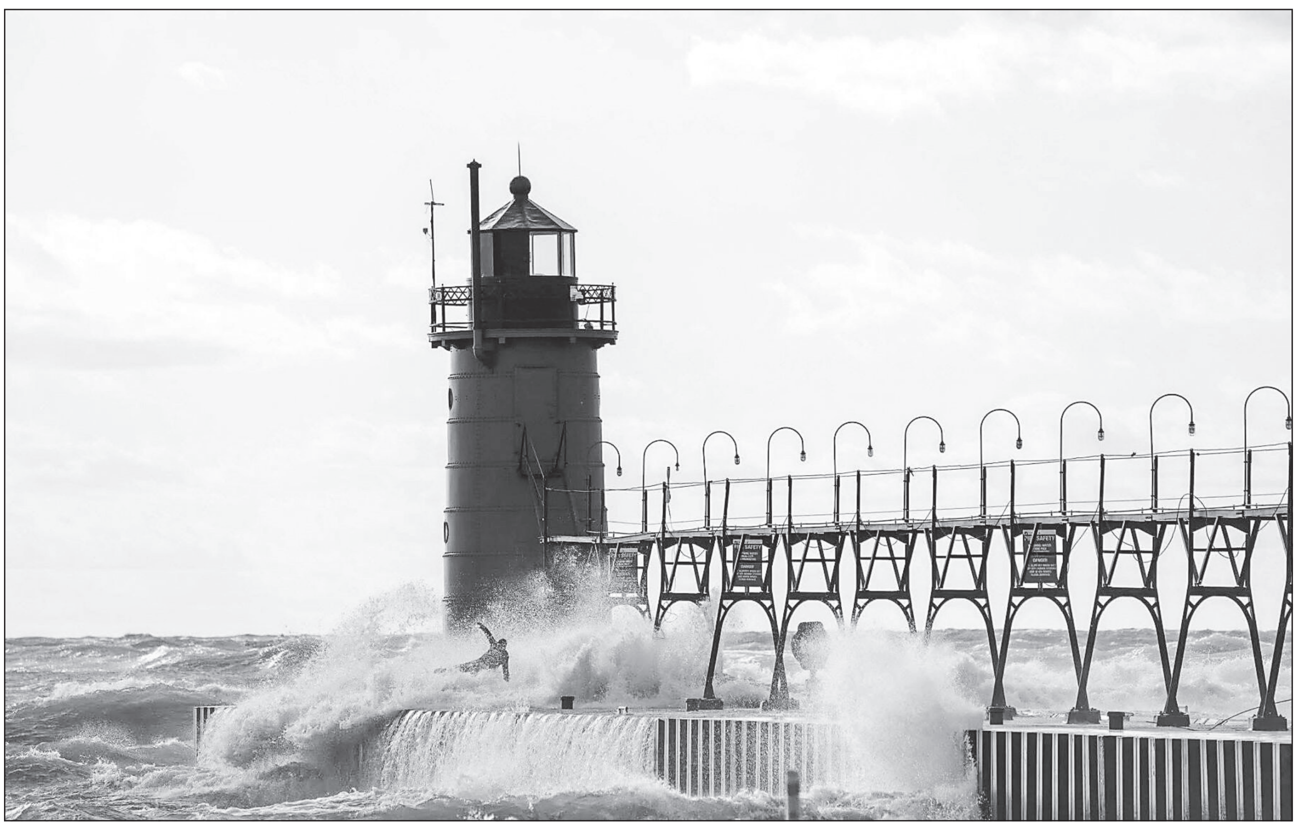

Photo provided / Ryan Bale

A 57-year-old man is shown above being swept off the Lake Michigan south pier on Friday in South Haven.

Man rescued after being swept off SH pier

Life ring used amid high wind, wave conditions

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — A 57-year-old man was rescued late last week when Lake Michigan waves swept him off the south pier in South Haven.

According to a news release, South Haven Area Emergency Services and South Haven Police Department responded to a report of a person being swept off the pier into the water at 5:40 p.m. Friday.

The city had declared the piers closed earlier in the day because of the high wind and wave conditions and was closed at the time of the incident.

"A second person with the victim threw him a life ring and pulled him to safety. He was out of the water when authorities arrived," the release stated. "The incident occurred near the lighthouse end of the pier."

The man, who was reported to be from out of state, was taken to Bronson-South Haven Hospital for treatment of injuries.

City officials sent out a reminder this weekend that people who go onto the piers in South Haven when they are closed are subject to a $1,000 fine.

Through its ongoing beach safety program, the city of South Haven installed year-round life ring stations in 2023. The South Haven Rotary Club supported the program with a $13,500 grant for the installation of the six stations located on the south and north piers. The grant also funded the purchase of three automated external defibrillator AED devices used by beach safety staff.

Michigan Maritime Museum to explore women's sailing history

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The Michigan Maritime Museum will host an evening lecture exploring the story of Evelyn Wright Crawford and the first all-women's crew to compete in the Chicago Yacht Club Race to Mackinac.

According to a news release, the program will take place at 6:30 p.m. on March 25.

"In 1905, Chicago socialite Evelyn Wright Crawford boarded her 32-foot sloop Lady Eileen with her cousin Sara Carey to compete in the fledgling Chicago Yacht Club race to Mackinac Island," the release stated. "Their effort made them the first all-women's team to man a boat in the race, an extraordinary achievement at a time when sailing and competitive sport were largely dominated by men."

The lecture will be presented by journalist and researcher Mark Reid and Madeline Crispell, curator of the Chicago Maritime Museum. Their multimedia presentation features rare historical photographs, many never shown publicly and explore Crawford's life as an early advocate for women's opportunities on and off the water.

The program will also examine the early years of the Chicago Yacht Club and growth of its famed race to Mackinac Island, now one of the most respected freshwater sailing races in the world.

"Madeline Crispell's exhibitions and programs at the Chicago Maritime Museum have explored topics ranging from architectural photography and the history of women on the Great Lakes to the work of Black Chicago impressionist James Bolivar Needham," the release stated. "Mark Reid is accredited media with the America's Cup and SailGP and conducts historical research for the Chicago Yacht Club's Race to Mackinac History Project."

Tickets for this event are free for museum members and $10 for non-members.

Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets may be purchased online at MichiganMaritimeMuseum.org/events, by phone by calling 269-637-8078, or in person at 260 Dyckman Ave. South Haven, MI.

The Michigan Maritime Museum Lecture Series is made possible through the support of the Nielsen-Wells Grant Fund and Mike and Susan Smith.

Recorded and virtual viewing of many lectures is made possible thanks to the support of Steve and Emily Holt.

South Haven 8th grade students toured local manufacturers including Vibracoustic, Shurco and FoodTools, along with South Haven Area Emergency Services as part of the annual career day field trip.

Provided photos

The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently hosted the immersive 8th grade career field trip to provides students with an opportunity to explore local career paths and engage with industry professionals.

Local students explore career paths in South Haven

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently hosted the 4th Annual 8th Grade Career Field Trip for students from Baseline Middle School.

According to a news release, this immersive event provides students with a unique opportunity to explore local career paths and engage with industry professionals.

"This immersive experience connected students directly with area employers, offering a behind-the-scenes look at a variety of industries right here in the South Haven community," the release stated.

Students toured local manufacturers including Vibracoustic, Shurco and FoodTools, along with South Haven Area Emergency Services; gaining valuable insight into day-to-day operations.

Throughout the visits, students heard directly from professionals about their roles, career paths and the skills needed to succeed in each field helping bring future opportunities into clearer focus.

"The experience comes at an important time for 8th grade students as they begin making decisions about their high school schedules and thinking more intentionally about their futures," the release stated.

The 8th Grade Career Field Trip is part of the Chamber's Youth Connections Program, which focuses on building meaningful connections between students and the local business community.

"By introducing young people to career pathways early on, the program helps inspire future goals while supporting the long-term vitality of South Haven's workforce," the release stated.

Many students also explore programs like those offered through the Van Buren Tech Center as they consider potential career pathways.

"Through initiatives like the 8th Grade Career Field Trip, the South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce continues its commitment to strengthening the connection between education and industry, investing in students today to support a thriving community tomorrow," the release stated.

For more information about the Chamber's Youth Connections Programs and the 8th Grade Career Field Trip, go to www.southhavenmi.com.

BOARD

From page A1

in the school board's April meeting.

Project bids

The board discussed the bids that were received to replace the network services firewall.

Director of Non-Instructional Services Kevin Dee recommended the bid from Vector Tech Group for $30,200 be chosen. The project is E-RATE fundable and the district can be refunded 85 percent of the cost.

The board approved four technology bids with a total cost of $266,962.64 for the Michigan State Armory renovation project.

The bids include four categories: cabling; audio and visual; access control; and security and wireless.

The board also approved district-wide wireless upgrades during Wednesday's meeting.

Eighty-five percent of the project will be funded by USF funding E-RATE and the rest will be through bonds. The project will cost $38,276.78.

Other items

Fisher Lach from the South Haven Alliance Campus program was chosen for this month's student pride award. The staff pride award was given to Allison Dubbink from Maple Grove Elementary School.

Pride awards are presented once a month during the school board meetings to at least one South Haven student and staff member. Pride awards are a tradition the school has done for more than 12 years to honor those who have shown excellence in academics and character.

The school board approved an overnight trip for the History Club to Saginaw Valley State University for the state competition, as well as a change of the semester end date, due to the amount of snow days this winter.

Lastly, the board approved the middle school reproductive health curriculum for students who qualify for special education.

Contact: jnewell@southhaventribune.com, 269-637-1104

PUBLIC NOTICE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
2026 SOUTHWEST REGION HERBICIDE PROGRAM

The Michigan Department of Transportation hereby provides notice to the public, and property owners adjacent to state highways of the 2026 Herbicide Application Program treatments for roadside rights-of way within Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Branch Counties.

SCHEDULED DATES OF APPLICATION:
Applications will take place between April 1, 2026, and December 1, 2026.

HERBICIDES/LOCATIONS:
Non-Selective Applications: (guardrail, pavement/shoulder cracks and edges, barrier walls, concrete bridge slopes, invasive plants) ANY INDIVIDUAL OR COMBINATIONS OF THE HERBICIDES LISTED BELOW:
Roundup Pro Concentrate (Glyphosate), **Plateau** (Imazapic), **Milestone** (Aminopyralid), **Escort XP** (Metsulfuron Methyl), **Polaris** (Isopropylamine salt of Imazapyr), **Esplanade 200SC** (Indaziflam), **Method 240SL** (Aminocyclopyrachlor), **Telar XP** (Chlorsulfuron) **Aquamaster/Roundup Custom** (Glyphosate).

Selective Applications: (broadleaf weeds in turf areas, brush control, plant growth regulator, invasive plants) ANY INDIVIDUAL OR COMBINATIONS OF THE HERBICIDES LISTED BELOW: **Milestone** (Aminopyralid), **Escort XP** (Metsulfuron Methyl), **Garlon 4 Ultra** (Triclopyr-2-butoxyethylester), **Plateau** (Imazapic), **Method 240SL** (Aminocyclopyrachlor), **Vastlan** (Triclopyr choline, acetic acid, choline salt), **TerraVue** (Aminopyralid, Florpyrauxifen-Benzyl), **HighNoon** (Aminopyralid, Florpyrauxifen-benzyl), **Garlon 3A** (Triclopyr).

METHOD OF APPLICATION:
Applications may be terrestrial, applied by vehicular-mounted fixed boom or hand spray gun equipment; or aerial drone applications. The herbicides will be tank-mixed or directly injected for each application.

RE-ENTRY RESTRICTIONS:
Do not enter treated areas until the spray has dried.

CONTACT:
All applications will be made by Certified Pesticide Applicators. For further information contact:

Rachael LeTourneau, Resource Analyst
Michigan Department of Transportation
1501 East Kilgore Road
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
269-303-2529

This notice is published per Regulation 637 Act No. 451, Public Acts of 1994, as amended.

STATE

Moving primary election to May advances as Senate passes bills

By BETH LEBLANC and CRAIG MAUGER
The Detroit News (TNS)

LANSING, Mich. — The Michigan Senate voted across party lines on Wednesday to adopt a 10-bill package that would move the state's primary elections from August to May, even after the Republican House speaker said he wasn't in favor of the legislation.

Currently, Michigan's primary elections for nominees for governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. House and seats in the Legislature are chosen by voters on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in August.

But the legislation, the main bill of which passed 29-4, would eliminate the August election and, beginning in 2028, move the regular primary election three months earlier to the first Tuesday after the first Monday in May. The package would also make the February presidential primary date, currently used every four years, a regular election date.

The bills were introduced in response to requests from local clerks, who argued no-reason absentee voting and early, in-person voting changes narrowed the preparation window between the August primary and November general.

The window leaves little time to canvass primary results, resolve recounts and then prepare for the November election, especially as mail-in voting and early, in-person voting start weeks ahead of the actual election date.

"They've been asking for a number of years for us to move the primary date," said state Sen. Sam Singh, an East Lansing Democrat who sponsored the main bill.

Republican state Sen. Jonathan Lindsey, R-Allen, on Wednesday attempted to tie the primary election bills to House legislation passed last week that would limit tax increase proposals to the November ballot. Lindsey's amendment was rejected.

"The bills before us are missing a golden opportunity to rectify one of the biggest claims I hear from Michigan voters: The fact that property tax increases are strategically placed on the ballot for low-turnout elections," Lindsey said.

A second amendment seeking to eliminate the allowance for additional February elections also was not adopted. Republicans argued Wednesday that a February election would require mail-in voting to begin in December, when most people are preoccupied with the holidays. The actual election date, they added, was likely to conflict with the schedules of snowbirds.

Michigan can ease doctor shortage by raising pay for primary care, group says

By ROBIN ERB
Bridge Michigan

Michigan should invest in primary care doctors to ease a severe shortage of physicians that has led to long wait times, higher costs and missed care, a new report says.

A 14-point plan released Tuesday by the Michigan State Medical Society, calls for vastly expanding pay and reimbursements. Overall, 5 percent of total medical expenditures go to primary care. The society wants to boost that to 12 percent.

"Michigan has made an underinvestment in primary care," said Dr. Tom George, an anesthesiologist and chief executive officer at the society.

Michigan is short at least 464 primary care providers, federal estimates show, fueled in part by a pay gap: They average $287,000 per year nationally, compared to $404,000 for specialists, according to one report last year.

Michigan's population is aging faster than most states, with 1.9 million residents – nearly 1 in 5 – already 65 or older.

The health conditions that come with age further stress the health care system. George said his group wants to focus on primary care expenses as other expenditures grow.

"This is not 'Let's just pay the neurosurgeons less than we'll pay primary care,'" George said. "We're talking about the big pie of health care spending" as it grows.

The report, which calls primary care doctors "the foundation of a robust, effective, and efficient system," stops short of dictating specific steps to spend more money on primary care.

But it highlights efforts elsewhere.

Oregon requires that 12 percent of the state's Medicaid dollars be spent on primary care, while Rhode Island mandates commercial insurers invest at least 10 percent on primary care.

The report comes as more than 1 in 4 Michiganders, about 2.7 million, live in Health Professional Shortage Areas, a federal designation based on the number of providers, the portion of residents under the federal poverty level, and travel time to the nearest providers outside the designated area.

Legislators have considered solutions such as giving broader responsibilities to nurse practitioners – a step that some have argued could help expand access. The doctors' group has fought that, saying that those clinicians don't have adequate training and should not work on their own, but rather as part of a physician-led team.

Michigan is also weighing temporary licenses to doctors who earned their degrees outside the US or Canada and continued participation in an interstate compact that lets providers licensed in other states practice here.

Building teams

Raising insurance reimbursements to primary care doctors would have a ripple effect, said Dr. Dennis Ramus from his office this week in New Baltimore, north of Detroit.

The increased funds would allow them to add, at a minimum, a nurse case manager and an advanced practice clinician, such as a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, to their practices, he said. Ultimately those teams also could include pharmacists, social workers, psychologists and others, he added.

While some health problems require specialists, "I can generally take care of 65 percent of what you need done if you call me first," said Ramus, the report's lead author.

Moreover, Michigan retains less than half of the primary care physicians it trains, according to the report.

The Michigan State Medical Society report also recommended:

1. All Medicaid and commercial payers abandon fee-for-service payments in primary care
2. Michigan establish a hub to provide practices with services such as accounting, billing and electronic health records
3. The state establish pre-medical apprenticeship programs to recruit medical students from "communities of need."
4. Michigan boost funds to allow medical students to pay off student loans
5. Michigan expand incentives for new doctors to practice in underserved areas.

'Foundational' care

The new report echoes findings from the New York-based Milbank Memorial Fund, a nonprofit research organization that focuses on health equity and produces a dashboard that tracks primary care spending by state.

Milbank and the Michigan doctors group say boosting payments for primary care allows doctors to expand their practice, thereby offering better care to more patients.

The key is to have those team members on-site as familiar faces on the care team, Ramus said.

While many offices purport to have health care "teams," members are often available only remotely, or they are a single staff assigned by a large health system to support many physicians, Ramus said.

"There's this illusion of a team," Ramus said.

While the reports' focus is on primary care, the Michigan State Medical Society represents physicians of all specialties.

"Specialists recognize the value of a foundational primary care that serves as the triage, sending appropriate patients to them," said George, the executive director.

South Haven Tribune CLASSIFIEDS

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Hours: Monday - Friday 9am-2pm EST

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0900 LEGALS

ATTENTION CITY OF BANGOR RESIDENTS NOTICE TO CUT WEEDS AND GRASSES

According to: CITY OF BANGOR
VAN BUREN COUNTY,
MICHIGAN ORDINANCE NO.
2023-1

SECTION 1. Title and Applicable Season

"This ordinance shall be known and cited as the Bangor Tall Grass and Weed Ordinance and shall be applicable and in full force and effect from April 1st through October 31st of each year."

SECTION 5. Duty to Cut Grass

"The owner and/or occupants of land to which this ordinance applies shall not allow grass or weeds to grow over six inches (6") in height throughout the growing season, including grass and weeds in the right-of-way, and it shall be the duty of all owners and/or occupants of land located in Bangor City either to cut or otherwise destroy by lawful means all tall grass and weeds, as defined in this ordinance, which are growing upon said property, before they reach a seed-bearing stage, and to prevent said weeds from perpetuating themselves and from becoming a detriment to public health. On an undeveloped lot, tall grass and weeds must be cut back at a distance of at least thirty feet from the roadway so as to allow a clear line of site for any person using a sidewalk or roadway."

Residents may obtain a copy of the full ordinance by request to the Bangor City Clerk's office. Phone: 269-427-5831 Email: clerk@cityofbangormi.gov

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In The Classifieds!

RESERVE THIS SPACE TODAY!

SOUTH HAVEN CHARTER TOWNSHIP SYNOPSIS
REGULAR MEETING MARCH 11, 2026

PRESENT: Poole, Wiatrowski, Fisher, Lewandowski, Bertorelli, and Stein
ABSENT: DeGrandchamp
Motion to approve February 11, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes.
Captain Brian Montgomery gave a report for SHAES. **Chief Adam DeBoer** gave a report for SHPD. Gail Gladney gave a report for VB County. **Dave Rozman** from Habitat for Humanity reported on the Home Repair Grants available in VB County.
Motion to approve the Agenda.
Dave Rozman from Habitat for Humanity spoke about doing a future affordable housing project in South Haven. Supervisor Stein reported that the township owns 7 acres that could be used for a future development.
Motion to support the Supervisor to seek an affordable housing development plan for this property.
Motion to approve Resolution 26-05 for the Road Commission to install light up signage on 72nd and 16th.
Dawn Hinz was in attendance to represent an organization that is hosting a triathalon at Lake Arvesta. She is requesting permission to use part of 8th Avenue for a running portion of the triathlon.
Motion to allow by Resolution the triathlon to this use a portion of 8th Avenue and to direct the organization to notify residents and to use SHPD and the Sheriff's department for safety.
Motion to direct the Officers to create a letter for our State Representation discouraging passage of House Bills that will take zoning control away from townships.
A Land Division Amendment was presented. Board members requested that they be allowed to review all of the information and this will be placed on next months agenda.
It was reported that the Township received Marijuana Excise Tax for 2025.
Item G Lawn Maintenance was postponed until the next meeting.
Brennon Davis from Wallick Group was in attendance to discuss the request to move the Pilot amount from 4% to 1% for Lighthouse Ridge. Supervisor Stein reported the economic impact of this request.
Motion to approve amending the ordinance and changing the PILOT from 4% to 1% and to forward that request to the attorney to help facilitate the changes.
Motion to approve the Donation Agreement with the Van Buren County Senior Services for development of the Sunset Grove Housing project.
Motion to approve Resolution 26-06 To Introduce Ordinance 173 to Amend Ordinance 172 adopting language approved by MSHDA.
Reports were received. W.C.Askew from the Road Commission was in attendance. Diane Rigozzi reported for Senior Services.
Motion to approve payment of bills in the amount of $91,902.42.
Meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.
Respectfully submitted, Brenda Bertorelli, Clerk

Vibracoustic USA, Inc. has an opening for Senior Design Engineer, Product Cluster Leader in South Haven, MI, responsible for providing a strong technical expertise and sense of leadership within the Design Engineering Team.Bach. Degree (or foreign academic equivalent) in Mechanical Eng., Automotive Eng., Mechatronics Eng., Production Eng. or related degree field and four (4) years of Exp. as an Application Eng., Process Eng., Product Eng., Project Eng., Design Eng. or related occupation. Must have Exp. with development of automotive components including spring isolators, suspension bushings, and motor mounting systems; Exp. with FMEA, APQP, GD&T, DVP&R, and PPAP; Exp. with cost analysis and problem solving methodology in the automotive industry such as (Ishikawa, 5 whys, etc.); Exp. working with CAD systems such as (CATIA, NX); Exp. working with FEA Software such as (Marc/Mentat, Abaqus); Exp. managing design release and change control processes using PLM systems such as (e.g., Teamcenter, ENOVIA); Exp. using FEA Pre/Post-processing software such as (Hypermesh/Hyperworks/Mentat); Eng. & Design Exp. with NVH Rubber Solutions; Exp. designing and tuning hydraulic NVH components; Exp. in Design for Manufacture, Cost, and Assembly; Exp. collaborating with global, cross-functional teams including manufacturing, quality, and purchasing; Exp. supporting and interpreting physical validation and NVH testing results for product optimization; Exp. conducting root cause analysis and design countermeasures in response to field and production issues; Exp. preparing and delivering technical documentation and customer presentations. No travel required for this position. This position is eligible for hybrid work up to 2 days per week after 6 months of employment, no relocation pkg offered. Any applicant who is interested in this position should apply to job reference number R_00099031 at https://freudenberg.wd3.myworkdayjobs.com/freudenberg-group/job/South-Haven-MI/Senior-Design-Engineer--Product-Cluster-Leader_R_00099031.

CITY OF SOUTH HAVEN PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE PLANNING COMMISSION

On Thursday, April 9, 2026, the Planning Commission for the City of South Haven will hear public comments related to the following request(s). The public hearing(s) will be held at 7:00 P.M. at City Hall, 539 Phoenix Street, South Haven concerning the following:

1. Special Land Use Application – 216 Elkenburg Street
Brandon and Kimberly Calhoun have submitted a special land use application to use the dwelling unit located at 216 Elkenburg St in the City of South Haven as a short-term rental. The parcel number for the referenced address is 80-53-245-004-00.

2. Zoning Text Amendment – Projecting and Hanging Signs
This text amendment modifies Section 2201.09 of the City of South Haven Zoning Ordinance related to projecting and hanging signs.

3. Zoning Text Amendment – Nonconforming Lots
This text amendment modifies Section 2304, Subsection 3 of the City of South Haven Zoning Ordinance related to nonconforming lots.

4. Master Plan Update
The Planning Commission for the City of South Haven will hold a public hearing to hear and consider public comment related to an updated Master Plan.

Supporting documentation is available for review at the Building Services office, 539 Phoenix Street, South Haven, MI 49090, during normal business hours. Written comments may be submitted in lieu of or in addition to a personal appearance. Written comments must be received no later than 12 p.m. (noon) on Thursday, April 9, 2026. Written comments should be addressed to the Planning Commission and must be submitted to the Zoning Administrator at kdissette@southhavenmi.gov or via postal mail addressed to the Planning Commission and sent to 539 Phoenix Street, South Haven, MI 49090.

Individuals requesting reasonable accommodation for impairments or disabilities should contact the City Clerk no later than five days prior to the public hearing in person at City Hall, at 269-637-0750, or at mkiker@southhavenmi.gov.

Kelly Getman-Dissette
Zoning Administrator
(269)637-0760 kdissette@southhavenmi.gov

South Haven welcomes new board game cafe

By TRIBUNE STAFF

The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Boards and a Boutique as a new chamber member.

Photos provided

Boards and a Boutique is a board game café featuring more than 180 board games available to play.

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce recently welcomed Boards and a Boutique as a new chamber member.

According to a news release, the chamber hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony at their downtown South Haven location, 269 Center Street, to celebrate a new space where the community can gather, play and connect.

"After 14 years in board-certified nursing, owner Alissa decided it was time for a new adventure," the release stated. "Alongside Alex, a data engineer, the pair turned a longtime love of board games into a welcoming space for the community. Through their travels, they experienced board game clubs in many places and were inspired to create a similar environment in South Haven where people can gather for good old-fashioned fun with family and friends."

Boards and a Boutique is a board game café featuring a catalog of more than 180 board games available to play. Guests can enjoy unlimited play for $10 per adult and $8 per child, with no time limit making it the perfect place to settle in and enjoy a game or two.

The shop also offers mental health–focused merchandise, inspired by Alissa's experience in psychiatric nursing and her passion for promoting awareness and well-being.

Looking ahead, the owners have plans to host private events such as team-building gatherings, birthday parties, anniversaries and game nights.

"The South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce is excited to welcome Boards and a Boutique to the local business community and encourages residents and visitors alike to stop in, explore the game library and experience this fun new gathering place in downtown South Haven," the release stated.

60-vehicle pile up shuts down I-94 near Hartford

Whiteout conditions contributed to multiple crashes, police say

By TRIBUNE STAFF

HARTFORD — A large-scale pile up on I-94 near Hartford caused a temporary full closure of the highway earlier this week.

According to a news release, Van Buren County deputies responded at about 5:30 p.m. Monday to multiple reports of numerous traffic crashes along westbound I-94 near the 56-mile marker.

"Deputies responding to the area discovered a large-scale incident involving approximately 60 vehicles," the release stated. "Several semi-trucks had jackknifed, contributing to a complete shutdown of westbound I-94."

At the same time, additional crashes were reported on eastbound I-94 near the 52-mile marker. These incidents resulted in the closure of eastbound lanes as well, effectively shutting down traffic in both directions.

"Deputies on scene managed a significant 20-vehicle crash near the 55-mile marker westbound, along with an additional four-vehicle crash in the same area," the release stated. "The closures caused extensive traffic delays and contributed to multiple secondary crashes and slide-offs on surrounding roadways."

Weather conditions at the time of the crashes were reported as whiteout conditions, significantly reducing visibility and creating hazardous driving conditions.

I-94 remained closed for three hours while emergency personnel and tow services worked to clear the roadway. The highway was fully reopened at 9 p.m. Monday night.

"Motorists are reminded to use extreme caution during severe winter weather conditions, reduce speed and allow for additional travel time," the release stated.

South Haven Performance Series announces 16th season

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Performance Series recently announced its 16th season that will feature six concerts and a new collaboration with South Haven Public Schools.

According to a news release, the concerts will begin at 7 p.m. except for the December concert at 4 p.m. and will be presented at two locations that offer barrier free access.

"We are delighted to be presenting performances that will embody a diverse range of classical ensembles in 2026," Series President Robert Linstrom said in the release. "Our expanded six concert schedule will include piano, string, woodwind and choral ensembles and will provide a dynamic series of performances that will continue our commitment to contribute to the cultural fabric of our community."

The series kicks off with Gilmore Piano Festival Artist Elliot Wuu on May 9.

"Young Steinway Artist Elliot Wuu captivates audiences with his vibrant tone and emotional depth," the release stated.

Wuu has garnered top prizes in international competitions and most recently, he is a laureate of the 2025 American Pianists Awards.

The Lincoln Trio, a chamber group consisting of piano, cello and violin will perform on June 26.

Nominated for a 2017 Grammy Award for Best Performance by a Small Ensemble and a 2024 Latin Grammy and winners of the 2008 Masterplayers International Competition in Venice, the Lincoln Trio has become one of Chicago's most celebrated chamber ensembles.

"Praised for their joy of sheer technical ability, unanimity of phrasing and beautiful blended tone, each member is an artist of international renown," the release stated.

The Vox GR Choral Ensemble will return to South Haven for a summer concert on July 24.

"Artistic Director Dr. Christopher Mason leads Vox GR, an ensemble which has become the premier professional choral ensemble in West Michigan," the release stated.

The ensemble performs a wide repertoire of choral music stretching across all eras from composers of diverse backgrounds.

The Cavatina Duo will perform on Aug. 28.

"The Duo, with Eugenia Moliner, flute (Spain) and Denis Azabagic, guitar (Bosnia), has become one of the most impressive combinations of its kind in the world," the release stated. "Their electrifying performances have captivated audiences worldwide in more than 30 other countries from Australia to Bhutan."

The Bayberry String Quartet will perform on Sept. 18.

Now in its eighth season, the quartet continues to perform in concert halls across the country, including Carnegie Hall, the Chautauqua Institution and Lincoln Center.

"A new opportunity this year will be offered in September, when the Bayberry String Quartet offers workshops and a performance for students at South Haven High School prior to an evening concert for the community," Linstrom said in the release.

Education is a cornerstone of quartet's mission to engage with people of all ages and backgrounds and a special feature of this September concert will be an afternoon with the quartet providing workshops with students at South Haven High School.

The season will close with the return of the Vox GR Choral Ensemble on Dec. 20.

Artistic Director Dr. Christopher Mason will lead Vox GR in a special holiday performance in South Haven.

"A free concert to close our 2026 season that celebrates the community's ongoing support for the South Haven Performance Series," the release stated.

The June and August concerts will be offered at the First United Methodist Church located at 429 Michigan Ave., and the May, July, September and December concerts will be at Peace Lutheran Church located at 06321 Blue Star Memorial Highway.

Admission is $15, free for students and is payable as cash at the door on the evening of the concert.

"The South Haven Performance Series is an all-volunteer community-based organization committed to providing excellence in classical music for area residents and visitors," the release stated. "Thanks to the generous support of the South Haven Community Foundation, corporate sponsors, and individual donors, all performances are provided at a very reasonable admission price."

For more information go to www.southhavenperformanceseries.org.

AAUW OF SOUTH HAVEN
PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE PRESENTS

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AAUW South Haven (MI) Branch

AAUW South Haven (MI) Branch

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY
410 ERIE STREET, SOUTH HAVEN, MI

DOORS WILL OPEN AT 6PM
EVENT WILL RUN FROM 6:30-8:30 PM.

Panelists include:
Christine Vanlandingham, CEO, Region IV Area Agency on Aging

Nicole Hudson, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Health Services Division

You will be able to submit questions at the event. You may also submit your questions beforehand to: shaauwppc@gmail.com

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Photos by Julie Newell / Tribune Editor

South Haven High School presented a jukebox musical entitled “The Olympians” for their fall production.

Greek goddesses Athena, Aphrodite and Artemis engage in a bet about how to best advance women’s place in the world in the South Haven High School’s fall production of “The Olympians.”

In the South Haven High School production of “The Olympians,” three Greek goddess choose one mortal girl and sets each of the three girls on a quest to prove which is the most powerful tool: a top-notch mind, a loving heart or a fighting spirit.

South Haven High School presented a jukebox musical entitled “The Olympians” for their fall production.

South Haven Scott Club to finish building renovations

By TRIBUNE STAFF

SOUTH HAVEN — The South Haven Scott Club’s accessibility improvement project is nearing completion.

According to a news release, an elevator is being installed in the 133-year-old Michigan Historic Site, located on Phoenix Street near downtown South Haven.

“The exterior touches of the elevator on both levels and other finishing touches will complement the historic nature of the building,” the release stated.

The $240,000 project has been made possible through contributions from individual donors, businesses and foundations.

The membership of the Scott Club provides educational and entertaining programs and a concert series which are free and open to all. These events are typically held in the upper level of the building.

“Currently, the upper level is only accessible via a narrow, steep staircase,” the release stated. “Attendees unable to navigate the stairs for years have watched programs from the lower level on a flat screen monitor; that will soon change.”

In recent years, the Scott Club has completed renovation projects to keep the building well-maintained, as well as improve accessibility with an ADA-approved entry door and an accessible bathroom.

“The Scott Club traces its origins to 1883, when pioneer women organized a group of friends to expand their horizons through the study of literature, other countries and cultures,” the release stated. “The name Scott Club was adopted when the group was reading the works of Sir Walter Scott.”

Originally a literary club for women, the Scott Club of today welcomes men in its membership.

A celebration of the project’s completion will be held at a later date.

Photo provided

The South Haven Scott Club’s accessibility improvement project of installing an elevator is nearing completion.

SOUTH HAVEN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Ongoing events

Visually impaired and blind persons support group meeting: Every third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. at Senior Services of Van Buren County.

Dementia and Alzheimer’s caregivers support group meeting: Every third Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. at Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church library.

Three Blondes Brewing: Trivia night on Thursdays at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 1 p.m. and 2 p.m.

Sparkle and Spice Boutique: Mom and Me play date. Fridays from 9-10 a.m.

South Haven Center for the Arts: Center Studio for adults from 6-8 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of the month. Artists of any level can bring their own projects to work on. Basic art supplies will be available. Attendees must be 18 years old and over. Members are free, non-members cost $5.

South Haven Center for the Arts: Center Studio for ages 9 to 13 from 4-5:30 p.m. every Wednesday. Young artists are invited to create art at their own pace with an instructor to help guide as needed. Free workshop but a $10 donation is suggested to help cover cost of supplies.

Candlelight Yoga: Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Church of Epiphany. Cost is $15.

Food pantry: First Congregational Church open from 10 a.m. to noon on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It is a drive-up food pantry.

Food pantry: Sacred Heart Catholic Church. For Bangor residents only. Open from 1 to 4 p.m. on Thursdays.

Food, clothing, baby pantry: Lily of the Valley Church in Covert. Open from noon to 2 p.m. on Wednesdays. Must call the central office to register.

Personal care and clothing pantry: First Assembly of God open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesdays. Must call the central office to register.

Baby pantry: Peace Lutheran Church open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Must call the central office to register.

Baby pantry: Simpson United Methodist Church in Bangor. Open from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays. Must call the central office to register.

South Haven Memorial Library: Story Time on 11 a.m. to noon on Tuesdays through May 26, 2026.

HawksHead: Pasta on the Patio every Wednesday at 5 p.m.

Michigan Maritime Museum: Hands-on the Harbor every Thursday at 10:30 a.m.

Lakeside Social Bowling Alley: Glow Bowl every Friday from noon to 9 p.m.

Bridge: Chicago Scoring at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays at the South Haven Memorial Library.

Bridge: Duplicate Scoring at 1 p.m. on Wednesdays at the South Haven Memorial Library.

Michigan Maritime Museum: free admission on the first Sunday of every month from November through April.

First United Methodist Church: Free meals every Tuesday night. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Meal is served at 6 p.m.

South Haven Memorial Library: Bridge Card Game from 1 to 4 p.m. every Tuesday and Wednesday. Open to the public. Beginners are welcome.

South Haven Memorial Library: Food Drive for non-perishable food items from March 5 through 31. For each item brought, you will be eligible for $0.50 in fine forgiveness up to $5.00 total.

Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum: March 1 through 31 “What Grew in Larry’s Garden” by Laura Alary and Kass Reich StoryWalk. The museum is closed but appointments can be scheduled by calling 630-842-9458.

Covert Branch Library: After school art workshop for students grades 6 through 12 every Monday from 3 to 5 p.m.

March

23 – Baseball: Boys junior varsity against Three Rivers High School at 4 p.m.

25 – South Haven Memorial Library: Friends of the South Haven library meeting from 2 to 3 p.m. The public is welcome to attend.

25 – Michigan Maritime Museum: “The Story of Evelyn Wright Crawford & the First All-Women’s Crew in the Chicago to Mackinac Race” lecture at 6:30 p.m. Free for museum members and $10 for non-members.

25 – Baseball: Boys junior varsity against Berrien Springs High School at 4 p.m.

25 – South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce: South Haven High School summer job fair.

26 – South Haven American Association of University Women Public Policy Committee: “Find out how the one big beautiful bill, HR1, will affect you” from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, 410 Erie Street, South Haven, MI.

27 – South Haven Memorial Library: Parent Cafes from 11 a.m. to noon. Snacks and engaging conversation about self-care, support and community resources. Free event. Kids can enjoy Stuffed Animal Story Time with the library staff during the event.

28 – South Haven Memorial Library: Astronomy Club at 11 a.m.

28 – South Haven Indivisible: No Kings 3 protest from 1 to 3 p.m. on Phoenix Road east of Broadway near First Congregational Church.

The Spotlight
A Weekly Guide To Services & Business Around Town.

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John J. Kim / Chicago Tribune / TNS

Four monk parakeets rest at a nest on a tree at the intersection of South Damen Avenue and West 68th Street on Feb. 18 in Chicago.

Tiny, raucous monk parakeets from South America thrive in Chicago. *But why?*

By ADRIANA PÉREZ
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

CHICAGO — At a quiet street intersection in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, the imposing figure of a pine tree is only outweighed by the massive collection of sticks and twigs carefully placed on its branches. It's a huge communal nest for monk or Quaker parakeets, who have called the structure home for the last 25 years or so.

Generations of these tiny, raucous, bright green birds from South America have survived, even thrived, in Chicago, beginning when likely escapees of the exotic pet trade first put down roots in some south suburbs in the 1960s and Hyde Park in the 1970s – and through every unforgiving winter in the Windy City since.

Despite their well-standing local presence, in many ways, the species remains a mystery to bird experts and enthusiasts alike. The inaccessibility of their nests, difficulties catching them to be banded, a priority focus on researching vulnerable and native species, and emerging factors, like human-made climate change, present old and new challenges to their study.

"Clearly, people are drawn to them. They're excited about them," said Edward Warden, president of the Chicago Ornithological Society. "And it often ends up being the kind of thing where people (are) asking questions in these forums and trying to sort of cobble together answers themselves."

Steven Pruett-Jones, a professor emeritus of ecology and evolution at the University of Chicago who researched the parakeets for 35 years until his retirement, has given dozens of interviews on the topic since the late 1980s.

"I think it keeps coming up because they are an interesting species," Pruett-Jones said. "They're very novel in the Chicago region. And there are a lot of immediate questions. And the questions keep arising, because the species keeps changing."

For instance, how long do the birds survive here, compared with their native range? Why do they build their nests the way they do? Why did they leave their original colonies in Hyde Park around 2010? Why did their local population plummet in the mid-2005s before rebounding? How will climate change positively or negatively affect their biology and behavior?

A scientist who is still seeking answers is Christopher Appelt, an associate professor at St. Xavier University on the South Side, who has studied the parakeets since he began noticing them in the area 20 years ago.

"Wow, we're surrounded," he humorously recalls thinking as he found out about their presence in Chicago, across the south suburbs, in other U.S. cities, in Europe and elsewhere around the globe.

While the species is naturally found in warm tropical and cooler subtropical and temperate areas, as well as high altitudes in South America, Chicago might be one of the coldest places where the birds have become established, according to Appelt.

Armando L. Sanchez / Chicago Tribune / TNS

A mural of Harold Washington with monk parakeets sits in the Hyde Park neighborhood Sunday March 1, 2026, in Chicago. While they are not native to North America monk parakeets are often seen in Hyde Park and other South Side neighborhoods.

"In their native range, they don't tolerate cold climates really at all, but they can tolerate that here because of backyard bird feeders," Pruett-Jones said.

In Chicago, monk parakeets can persevere despite their urban environment, and because of it. To withstand the bitter cold, these birds rely mostly on bird feeders, something they wouldn't find in as much supply in less densely populated areas. "It's really about getting enough energy to keep yourself warm," Appelt said.

When Gilberto Gutiérrez and his family – whose backyard houses the pine tree nest and its inhabitants – moved in 10 years ago and learned about the birds, he thought "Qué chulada," he told the Tribune in Spanish. "How cool." Hands in his pockets, he looked up as groups of the screeching birds flocked back to their home on a chilly afternoon.

But Gutiérrez also had some initial reservations. "Se me van a morir todos por el frío," he said. "They're all going to die because of the cold." He was proven wrong, however, when he realized they could survive extreme temperatures. He soon began buying birdseed to put in a feeder that hangs from the tree's branches.

"Especially in the depths of winter, they turn to humans," Warden said. "These were birds that, in theory, really shouldn't have lasted. But they did."

It's why the childhood memories of many South Side residents, like Edgar Florentino, are often peppered with the shrilly squawks and green airborne blurs of monk parakeets. His father, who worked as a tailor in Hyde Park in the early 2000s, would bring Florentino to the neighborhood on weekend errands to try and catch a glimpse of the birds.

"It was very beautiful," Florentino said.

Despite popular fascination in these little birds around the city – former Chicago Mayor Harold Washington famously had a soft spot for the parakeets, a connection immortalized in a mural adjacent to the 53rd Street Metra viaduct – Appelt was surprised to find out there was a gap in scientific research regarding their possible effects on native species.

"That was my starting point," Appelt said. "My knee-jerk reaction is always: A nonnative species is a potential problem."

For instance, he thought maybe the big groups of monk parakeets could be coming in as a "noisy motorcycle gang," intimidating other birds at feeders. But his research found that was not the case – in a city, food sources for birds often abound in ornamental plants, feeders and food waste.

The parakeets are also unusual in that they don't compete with other species for a place to raise their young. Other nonnative species, such as European starlings and house sparrows, nest in crevices and cavities like roof overhangs, usually pushing out native species like bluebirds.

"Monk parakeets also buck that trend," Warden said.

Their nests, built on trees and utility poles, can often weigh hundreds of pounds and grow several feet tall and act more like a multifamily apartment building.

"Imagine all the tunnels that criss-cross and all the little rooms they have inside there," Florentino mused. A few weeks ago, he posted a now-viral video to TikTok of one of the massive nests in West Englewood – almost 2 miles away from the one at the Gutiérrez home – which Florentino often walks past on his way to work.

For right now, Appelt said, there's no evidence that they are causing any problems. But research into the parakeets should not be one and done, he said: "They are so unique, so well-suited, to be a potentially invasive species or be a successful, nonnative colonizer."

"That's why science is important, right? Because we're keeping an open mind," he added. "We're always trying to learn new things, and changing as we learn that the things we thought were right are wrong, and vice versa."

As climate change warms and shortens winters, it could broaden the monk parakeets' range of movement, allowing them to survive in more rural areas.

"One of the big questions about monk parakeets is, will they ever become an agricultural pest like they (are) in Argentina?" Pruett-Jones said. There, they damage crops like corn, sunflowers and fruits.

In Italy, for example, a warming climate has attracted the birds to the countryside, where they have devastated almond and fruit crops. In Chicago, the parakeets have recently descended into the industrial Calumet region on the city's Southeast Side, right on the edge of agricultural land.

But Pruett-Jones thinks the parakeets won't thrive where crops don't grow during the winter, since that means no food.

"I suspect with climate change, eventually … they'll spread north into Wisconsin, and I think they'll spread north into Michigan, especially along the lakefront," he said. "I don't think they'll spread into agricultural regions, but I do expect them to spread along the cities."

On the other hand, climate change could negatively affect parakeet populations as winter storms grow more intense. Pruett-Jones recalled a die-off a decade or so ago when he received several reports of dead or frostbitten parakeets. He noted that, "even if the snowstorms are less frequent, they're going to be more severe."

"You have to keep an eye on these guys, not just because they're interesting," Appelt said. "You have to always be vigilant."

To monitor them, however, scientists need better access to their nests, often using expensive trucks outfitted with lifts or booms that can reach over 30 feet tall. Catching the birds to band them is also usually very hard, as they are quick, swift flyers.

But the public delight these tiny creatures tend to generate can be a tool to garner support for further research, and to more generally get communities interested in birds.

"When people see them around, they take notice," Warden said. "It doesn't really matter if it's a nonnative bird or a feeder raider or potentially risk (of) you having a power outage. It's just a cool entry point."

It gets people talking to and engaging with each other, he added.

"However many times people talk about monk parakeets, or however many articles are written about them, I don't think the interest will ever truly die down," Pruett-Jones said.

Anton Vierietin / Getty Images

How Instagram addictiveness lawsuit could reshape social media – platform design meets product liability

By CAROLINA ROSSINI
Professor of Practice and Director for Program, Public Interest Technology Initiative, UMass Amherst (The Conversation)

A Los Angeles courtroom is hosting what may become the most consequential legal challenge Big Tech has ever faced.

This is an inflection point in the global debate over Big Tech liability: For the first time, an American jury is being asked to decide whether platform design itself can give rise to product liability – not because of what users post on them, but because of how they were built.

As a technology policy and law scholar, I believe that the decision, whatever the outcome, will likely generate a powerful domino effect in the United States and across jurisdictions worldwide.

The case

The plaintiff is a 20-year-old California woman identified by her initials, K.G.M. She said she began using YouTube around age 6 and created an Instagram account at age 9. Her lawsuit and testimony allege that the platforms' design features, which include likes, algorithmic recommendation engines, infinite scroll, autoplay and deliberately unpredictable rewards, got her addicted. The suit alleges that her addiction fueled depression, anxiety, body dysmorphia – when someone see themselves as ugly or disfigured when they aren't – and suicidal thoughts.

TikTok and Snapchat settled with K.G.M. before trial for undisclosed sums, leaving Meta and Google as the remaining defendants. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before the jury on Feb. 18, 2026.

The stakes extend far beyond one plaintiff. K.G.M.'s case is a bellwether trial, meaning the court chose it as a representative test case to help determine verdicts across all connected cases. Those cases involve approximately 1,600 plaintiffs, including more than 350 families and over 250 school districts. Their claims have been consolidated in a California Judicial Council Coordination Proceeding, No. 5255.

The California proceeding shares legal teams and evidence pool, including internal Meta documents, with a federal multidistrict litigation that is scheduled to advance in courtlater this year, bringing together thousands of federal lawsuits.

Legal innovation: Design as defect

For decades, Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act shielded technology companies from liability for content that their users post. Whenever people sued over harms linked to social media, companies invoked Section 230, and the cases typically died early.

The K.G.M. litigation uses a different legal strategy: negligence-based product liability. The plaintiffs argue that the harm arises not from third-party content but from the platforms' own engineering and design decisions, the "informational architecture" and features that shape users' experience of content. Infinite scrolling, autoplay, notifications calibrated to heighten anxiety and variable-reward systems operate on the same behavioral principles as slot machines.

THE CONVERSATION

These are conscious product design choices, and the plaintiffs contend they should be subject to the same safety obligations as any other manufactured product, thereby holding their makers accountable for negligence, strict liability or breach of warranty of fitness.

Judge Carolyn Kuhl of the California Superior Court agreed that these claims warranted a jury trial. In her Nov. 5, 2025, ruling denying Meta's motion for summary judgment, she distinguished between features related to content publishing, which Section 230 might protect, and features like notification timing, engagement loops and the absence of meaningful parental controls, which it might not.

Here, Kuhl established that the conduct-versus-content distinction – treating algorithmic design choices as the company's own conduct rather than as the protected publication of third-party speech – was a viable legal theory for a jury to evaluate. This fine-grained approach, evaluating each design feature individually and recognizing the increased complexities of technology products' design, represents a potential road map for courts nationwide.

What the companies knew

The product liability theory depends partly on what companies knew about the risks of their designs. The 2021 leak of internal Meta documents, widely known as the "Facebook Papers," revealed that the company's own researchers had flagged concerns about Instagram's effects on adolescent body image and mental health.

Internal communications disclosed in the K.G.M. proceedings have included exchanges among Meta employees comparing the platform's effects to pushing drugs and gambling. Whether this internal awareness constitutes the kind of corporate knowledge that supports liability is a central factual question for the jury to decide.

There is a clear analogy to tobacco litigation. In the 1990s, plaintiffs succeeded against tobacco companies by proving they had concealed evidence about the addictive and deadly nature of their products. In K.G.M., the plaintiffs here are making the same core argument: Where there is corporate knowledge, deliberate targeting and public denial, liability follows.

K.G.M.'s lead trial attorney, Mark Lanier, is the same lawyer who won multibillion-dollar verdicts in the Johnson & Johnson baby powder litigation, signaling the scale of accountability they are pursuing.

The science: Contested but consequential

The scientific evidence on social media and youth mental health is real but genuinely complex. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) does not classify social media use as an addictive disorder. Researchers like Amy Orben have found that large-scale studies show small average associations between social media use and reduced well-being.

Yet Orben herself has cautioned that these averages might mask severe harms experienced by a subset of vulnerable young users, particularly girls ages 12 to 15. The legal question under the negligence theory is not whether social media harms everyone equally, but whether platform designers had an obligation to account for foreseeable interactions between their design features and the vulnerabilities of developing minds, especially when internal evidence suggested they were aware of the risks.

First, a manufacturer has a duty to exercise reasonable care in designing its product, and that duty extends to harms that are reasonably foreseeable. Second, the plaintiff must show that the type of injury suffered was a foreseeable consequence of the design choice. The manufacturer doesn't need to have foreseen the exact injury to the exact plaintiff, but the general category of harm must have been within the range of what a reasonable designer would anticipate.

This is why the Facebook Papers and internal Meta research are so legally significant in K.G.M.'s case: They go directly to establishing that the company's own researchers identified the specific categories of harm – depression, body dysmorphia, compulsive use patterns among adolescent girls – that the plaintiff alleges she suffered. If the company's own data flagged these risks and leadership continued on the same design trajectory, that would considerably strengthen the foreseeability element.

Why it matters

Even if the science is unsettled, the legal and policy landscape is shifting fast. In 2025 alone, 20 states in the U.S. enacted new laws governing children's social media use. And this wave is not only in the U.S.; countries such as the U.K., Australia, Denmark, France and Brazil are also moving forward with specific legislation, including mandates banning social media for those under 16.

The K.G.M. trial represents something more fundamental: the proposition that algorithmic design decisions are product decisions, carrying real obligations of safety and accountability. If this framework takes hold, every platform will need to reconsider not just what content appears, but why and how it is delivered.

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FOCUS

Elizabeth Flores / The Minnesota Star Tribune

“Papi,” yells Dylan as he plays with his father’s shoes in his family’s suburban mobile home in February. Dylan’s father, Osmin, was deported to his native El Salvador during Operation Metro Surge.

After detainments and deportations, the lives left behind in Minnesota

By EMMA NELSON, JP LAWRENCE
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

ST. PETER, Minn. — Mercedes checked her phone again, waiting for her husband to call from the detention center.

Forty-one days earlier, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents had detained Paco as he walked to his car. Mercedes said she had watched from the window of their mobile home as agents handcuffed him.

Paco was undocumented but had no criminal record, she said.

Mercedes, who is also undocumented, has hardly left home since. Hiding inside, Paco’s possessions are all around, each item prompting a memory of him and their life together.

In their bedroom, she keeps a table with a bottle of his cologne, his shampoo and his Bible. In the corner there’s a piggy bank, filled with money Mercedes and Paco were saving for their daughter’s quinceañera.

Eight days after Paco’s arrest, Mercedes found some of his clothing in the gap between his side of the bed and the wall. He kept shorts and a t-shirt there for sleeping, and Mercedes realized she could still smell his scent on them. She cried and then put the clothes back where he had left them.

“I imagine that, I don’t know – I’m crazy – I imagine he’s going to come through that door,” Mercedes said in Spanish.

Since Operation Metro Surge began in December, federal immigration agents have detained and deported people across Minnesota and in some border communities, dwarfing enforcement in other states. The exact number is unclear, but ICE claims, without evidence, to have detained 11,000 immigrants living in Minnesota illegally since President Donald Trump returned to office last year.

What is clear: Each person plucked from their day-to-day existence left a whole life behind. There are shoes by the front door and an empty bed. There’s a car in the driveway and a job undone. There are pets that need feeding, bills that keep arriving and leases with months left to pay.

Given the scale and speed of detentions and deportations during the past few months, it’s often a scramble to figure out where someone is being held, much less how to contact their landlord or renew their vehicle tabs.

When family members or roommates aren’t available to guard belongings and manage logistics, neighbors and community organizations have often stepped in, locating a car abandoned during an arrest or fundraising a month’s rent.

“There’s always a level of chaos when somebody gets detained, because it is this heightened state where our clients or their family members are like, ‘Oh my God, this big thing just happened,’” said Camila Pacheco-Fores, a staff attorney with the Immigration Law Project at Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid. “But it’s just, truthfully, completely out of control over the last couple of months.”

Bills keep coming

Mercedes and Paco’s story is one of many, though few speak out about it. Immigrants, documented and not, and the people who help them often fear repercussion and decline to share their full names for protection.

In Prescott, Wis., just across the Minnesota border, it took about a week for American friends of a detained Ecuadorian couple to figure out where ICE had sent them.

After a month in Texas, the two are now with family in Ecuador, where their friends plan to deliver their belongings: clothes, phones, passports. The friends, who requested anonymity, have also taken over some of the couple’s bills and made plans to sell their car.

They’d started clearing out the couple’s apartment once it became clear the couple wouldn’t be returning.

On a recent weekday morning, there was little evidence of the life once lived in the apartment: a red and green Christmas garland still hanging above the kitchen window; a key hook by the door that read, in Spanish, “My beautiful Ecuador.”

A Twin Cities landlord said her longtime tenant disappeared in January, shortly after she collected his monthly rent check. He gave her $100 as a Christmas present that day, she said.

“I can still see his face,” the landlord said.

The man’s roommates are still living in the apartment they shared, but because they’ve been afraid to work since he was detained, she stopped charging them rent.

When a landlord isn’t willing to give a deported tenant a break, Minnesota law offers some protections.

Landlords can’t force someone out of their apartment if they’re detained or deported, but they can sue for eviction if the tenant doesn’t pay rent, according to a deportation preparedness manual the Volunteer Lawyers Network (VLN) published last year. If a tenant abandons a property, the landlord must store and care for that person’s possessions for 28 days.

If the court approves an eviction, the county sheriff’s office can remove people and property from the unit. But it can take months to reach that point, according to the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office, which has not seen an uptick in eviction cases since Operation Metro Surge began.

Like rent, other bills and debts don’t disappear after a detention or deportation. A deported person can continue to own property in the U.S., for example, but will face foreclosure if they stop paying their mortgage.

Unpaid debts can be reported to credit reporting agencies, according to VLN, and in Minnesota, creditors usually have up to six years to sue for nonpayment.

Losing a breadwinner

Even a short detention can be catastrophic for a household, said Pacheco-Fores, the immigration attorney. She said agents have frequently detained household breadwinners on their way to work.

“Not only do you have this trauma of your family member, someone in your household, being taken away from you ... you also have a loss of income. You also potentially have legal fees that you need to pay,” she said. “And all of a sudden, that means maybe you don’t have enough to pay rent that month.”

In the Twin Cities, immigration officers detained Brenda’s husband, Osmin, on his way to his painting job during the early days of Operation Metro Surge. To support herself and her toddler son, Dylan, she started working nights at a laundromat while her brother provided child care. Then, in February, agents detained her brother while he was running errands.

Neither of the men had a criminal record, she said.

Brenda, who like her husband and brother is undocumented, now wakes up at 2:30 a.m., drops Dylan off with his grandfather or a friend and starts work at 5 a.m.

It’s hard to head out so early in the cold, she said. And since his father was taken, Dylan has started waking up in the night, crying.

“I think the people who suffer the most are the children,” she said in Spanish. “He asks for his father, and what can I say?”

When he was detained, Osmin thought he would be released, Brenda said, so he held onto his car keys. But a week later, he was deported to his native El Salvador. She has since sent him a box of clothes and gotten a new set of keys.

There are signs of him throughout the family’s suburban mobile home. His shoes are on a rack opposite the front door. Vats of paint for his job are stacked in a corner, and a Palm Sunday cross is affixed to the door with orange painter’s tape.

On Brenda’s phone, Dylan toggles between children’s videos on YouTube and a video of himself as a baby playing with his father.

It’s been a struggle getting by on her own, Brenda said. Bills are tough to manage; rent alone is $1,200 a month.

“When I go to work, I’m afraid,” she said. “I’m afraid something will happen, and my son will be left alone.”

Still, she plans to stay put. Dylan is a citizen, and despite everything that’s happened, she’d rather be in Minnesota than return to Mexico.

Though a recent weekday afternoon was sunny, the inside of the mobile home was dark. Above the couch, the word “home” was printed in English on drawn curtains.

‘It won’t be the same anymore’

Cristina Ralios thought of her uncle as she walked past his car with the busted window.

Cristina, a 17-year-old high school senior, lives in the same St. Peter mobile home park as Mercedes. She said federal agents detained her uncle the morning of Jan. 15, and in the process, smashed the rear passenger window of his prized Ford Explorer.

Her uncle had a valid work permit, no criminal record and now awaits his day before a judge in Texas, Ralios said. He immigrated from Guatemala nearly two decades ago and raised three daughters, with one more on the way.

The family found the Ford Explorer abandoned after her uncle was detained, Ralios said, with the keys missing and his lunchbox still in the cab.

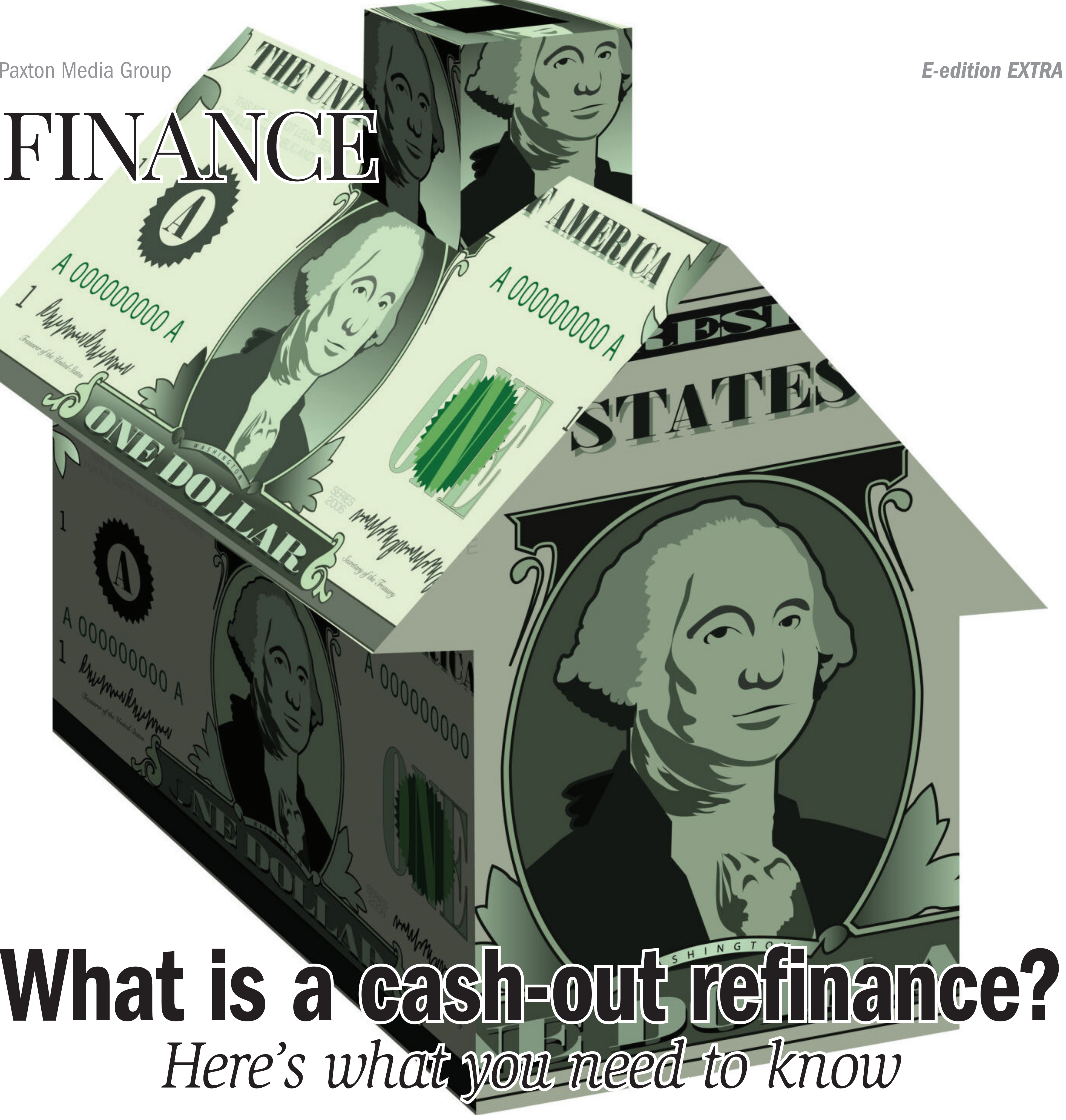
Her uncle had been so proud when he bought the car with money he earned working at a Le Sueur dairy company, Ralios said.

“We’re going to get this car fixed, we’re going to get him out of there, and then he’s going to come back home, and then he’s going to have his brand new car,” she said.

In her mobile home, Mercedes kept waiting for Paco to call. She searched for his clothes, the ones with his scent on them. But in the gap between his side of the bed and the wall, she could not find them. Mercedes wondered if their 11-year-old daughter, who does not like seeing her mother cry, had hidden them.

She said her daughter wants everything to return to normal, for her father to come back and for the family to go to the mall or the zoo together again. But Mercedes said she has been losing hope that can happen, even if Paco somehow gets released and can come back to Minnesota.

“It won’t be the same anymore,” she said.



What is a cash-out refinance?

Here's what you need to know

By ALLISON MARTIN
Bankrate.com (TNS)

A cash-out refinance replaces your current mortgage with a new, larger one. It includes the remaining balance of your original loan plus an additional amount that you'll withdraw in cash. This cash comes from your home's equity.

You'll receive the cash in a lump-sum payment. You can use this money for any purpose, including home remodeling, debt consolidation, college tuition or other financial needs.

How does a cash-out refinance work?

A cash-out refi is similar to a regular refi (also called a "rate-and-term" refi). You'll replace your existing mortgage with a new one at a new interest rate, and sometimes a new term length. The difference is that your new loan is for a larger amount, rather than just the remaining balance of your original loan. That larger amount includes cash withdrawn from your home's equity.

In other words, when you use a cash-out refinance, you exchange some of your home's equity for cash. This reduces the equity you have in your home.

Cash-out refi example

Let's say you still owe $100,000 on your home, and it's currently worth $400,000. That means you have $300,000 in equity. For a cash-out refinance, your loan amount is typically limited to 80 percent of the home's value – meaning you must leave at least 20 percent of your home's value untouched. So in this example, that means you'd need to keep $80,000 of your equity intact, but you could take out $220,000.

If you want to withdraw the maximum amount, you'd take out a new mortgage for $220,000, which you'd repay at a new interest rate and, potentially, a different term.

Cash-out refinance requirements

Just as you would with any mortgage, you'll need to meet qualifying criteria for a cash-out refinance. For a conventional loan, these requirements include:

■ Credit score: You'll generally need a credit score of at least 620 to qualify. But a higher score will get you a more competitive interest rate.

■ Debt-to-income (DTI) ratio: This measures your monthly debt payments – including the refinanced mortgage payment – against your gross monthly income. Lenders often cap this at 43 percent.

■ Equity: Most lenders require you to maintain 20 percent equity in your home after you've taken cash out, so you'll need more equity than that to make a cash-out refinance worthwhile.

■ Seasoning: Conventional cash-out refis typically come with a six-month seasoning requirement, meaning you must have owned the home for at least six months.

Cash-out refinance fees

The closing costs on a cash-out refinance – and any type of refinance – are almost always less than the closing costs on a home purchase. For a cash-out refi, the lender typically charges an appraisal fee and might charge an origination fee, often a percentage of the amount you're borrowing.

How to get a cash-out refinance

Here are the basic steps to secure a cash-out refi:

■ Determine how much you can withdraw: You'll do this by calculating 80 percent of your current home value, or multiplying the figure by 0.80. Then subtract your current mortgage balance from your result. The answer is the amount you may be able to cash out.

■ Figure out your goals: Clarify how you'd like to use the funds from your cash-out refinance. A financial advisor can help you decide if a refinance would help you meet your financial goals and if the new payment would be affordable.

■ Shop around for the best terms: Each lender has its own qualifying criteria, as well as its own set of closing costs and fees. Comparing rates and terms from a few different lenders can help you get the best deal available.

■ Apply for the loan: Once you've chosen a lender, apply and go through its underwriting process. Be ready to provide proof of income, like financial statements and tax returns. Keep in mind that, as part of this process, your home will need to be professionally appraised. The mortgage lender needs to know what your home is worth to calculate how much equity you have, and from that, how much you can borrow.

■ Close on the loan: After the closing, you'll receive the lump sum of cash from your new lender.

How much cash can you get with a cash-out refinance?

With a conventional cash-out refinance – the most common kind – you can typically borrow up to 80 percent of your home's value. However, this threshold varies depending on the property type. With a multi-family home, for example, you can often only borrow up to 75 percent.

For an FHA cash-out refinance, you might be eligible to borrow up to 80 percent of the value of your home. And with a VA loan cash-out, you could potentially qualify to tap all of your home's equity.

Ways to use the money from a cash-out refinance

You can use the money from a cash-out refinance for almost any purpose. However, many borrowers use the proceeds for expenses such as:

■ Major home improvement projects: You could use a cash-out refinance to remodel your kitchen or put an addition on your house, for example.

■ High-interest debt consolidation: Refinance rates tend to be lower than the rates on other forms of debt, like credit cards. You can use a cash-out refinance to pay off these debts. Then you'll repay the cash-out refinance with one, lower-cost monthly payment.

■ College tuition: Tapping home equity to pay for college can make sense if the refinance rate is lower than the rate for a student loan.

■ Investments: Some people purchase an investment property using a cash-out refinance. Others use the funds for goals like starting a business.

This type of refinancing is one of the cheaper ways to pay for large expenses, in part because the collateral involved – your home – translates to lower risk for lenders. In a pinch, you're far more likely to pay your mortgage than your credit card bill, for instance.

Pros and cons of cash-out refinancing

Pros

■ Could qualify for better terms: If market rates have decreased – or your finances have improved – since you first took out your mortgage, a cash-out refinance could result in lower rates.

■ Lowering your cost to borrow: Cash-out refinances often have lower rates than home equity loans, personal loans and credit cards.

■ Improving your credit: If you use your equity to consolidate debt, your credit utilization ratio – the amount of your outstanding balances compared to your overall credit limits – could drop. This can help boost your credit score.

■ Taking advantage of tax deductions: If you use the cashed-out funds for home improvements and itemize your taxes, you could deduct the interest.

Cons

■ Your interest rate might actually go up: If interest rates have risen substantially since your original mortgage, you'll pay more on your new loan, even with good credit. Since the new mortgage is bigger, you'll be charged more in interest, too.

■ You could prolong repayments: If you're using a cash-out refi to consolidate debt, make sure it's the best option and that you couldn't otherwise pay the debt off sooner for less. "Unless you can lower your interest rate or shorten your loan term, it may be more practical to consider a home equity loan or line of credit for smaller or more specific borrowing needs," says Stephen Kates, financial analyst for Bankrate.

■ You increase the risk of losing your home: A cash-out refinance increases your mortgage balance. Failing to repay the loan means you could lose your home to foreclosure. Don't take out more cash than you really need, and make sure you're using it for a purpose that will improve your finances instead of worsening your situation.

Is a cash-out refinance a good idea for you?

Ultimately, it depends on your personal situation. You might benefit from a cash-out refi if:

■ You can qualify for a lower rate: If mortgage rates have decreased since you first took out your loan, or your credit has improved – or both – you may be able to get a lower rate when you refinance. If so, a cash-out refinance might make more sense than other methods of tapping your home equity.

■ You need the funds to improve your long-term financial outlook: A cash-out refinance can be a good idea if you're using the money to build wealth, for example, by adding value to your home or by funding your education.

On the other hand, even if you can qualify for and afford a cash-out refinance, it's not ideal if you need to borrow a relatively small amount of money or if you don't use the money to build wealth – for example, if you use it to pay off credit card debt, but then accumulate more.

Alternatives to a cash-out refinance

If a cash-out refi doesn't work for you, here are some alternatives to consider.

■ HELOC: A home equity line of credit, or HELOC, allows you to borrow money when you need to with a revolving line of credit, similar to a credit card. HELOC interest rates are variable, fluctuating with the prime rate. To get a HELOC, you must meet certain requirements.

■ Home equity loan: A home equity loan is a second mortgage that provides a lump-sum payment. Unlike a HELOC, home equity loans have a fixed rate, and you start repaying them immediately. Bankrate's home equity loan calculator can show you how much you might be able to borrow.

■ Personal loan: A personal loan is a shorter-term loan that provides funds for virtually any purpose. Personal loan interest rates vary widely and can depend on your credit, but they're typically higher than rates for loans that are secured by your home. You'll usually repay the loan on a monthly basis, like a mortgage. Personal loans often require less paperwork than a refinance and can sometimes be approved and funded the same day you apply, but they tend to have smaller limits than other loan types.

■ Reverse mortgage: A reverse mortgage allows homeowners who meet equity and age requirements to withdraw cash from their homes. The balance doesn't have to be repaid for as long as the borrower lives in and maintains the home and pays their property taxes and homeowners insurance.

FAQ

■ How will my monthly mortgage payment change after refinancing? Your payment could change depending on a couple of factors: the rate you receive and how much equity you're pulling out. If you're refinancing to a much lower rate, you could end up with a similar payment, even with taking on a larger loan. Conversely, if the rate is similar to or higher than your current one, your payment will go up. Your payment could also increase if you shorten the loan term – from 30 years to 15 years, for example.

■ Does cash-out refinancing hurt your credit? It might. A cash-out refinance can hurt your credit score because you will owe more money, which impacts your credit utilization ratio, one of the biggest contributors to your overall credit score. Opening a new loan also shortens your average credit account age, which can lower your credit score.

Key takeaways

■ A cash-out refinance replaces your current mortgage with a new, bigger one. The borrower receives the difference between the two balances in cash.

■ The terms of your refinanced mortgage might differ from your original loan, including a new interest rate and a longer or shorter loan duration.

■ You can do a cash-out refi for any reason, but many borrowers use one to pay for large-scale home improvements.

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James Blake performs onstage during Global Citizen NOW at Spring Studios on April 30, 2025, in New York City.
Noam Galai / Getty Images for Global Citizen / TNS

James Blake escaped the major label labyrinth

Now, he's got an album to show for it

By JULIUS MILLER
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

LOS ANGELES — "I think what makes a good rollout is the right songs get the love they deserve," James Blake said, over a Friday evening call. He's in the midst of yet another album rollout, one of many in his storied career.

It's the part artists can dread, but he doesn't seem to have too much of a problem with it.

"I've really built up a community … it feels like I know the people I'm delivering this record to," he continues. "It's shown up in the metrics; we just sold a U.K. run out in under a minute, sold out the f— New York show in presale. … I've never done that before."

"To be honest, it's kind of emotional for me, seeing that they haven't forgotten me," he adds with a laugh.

"Trying Times," out Friday, feels like a return to form for Blake, who first entered the scene back in 2009 with the release of the 12-inch EP "Air & Lack Thereof" followed by three more EPs. The following self-titled album in 2011 bolstered his success and artistic ability.

He spent the next decade receiving similar recognition, even snatching up a best rap performance Grammy Award for his work on "King's Dead" in 2018. The hit song came off the "Black Panther" soundtrack and saw him work alongside Kendrick Lamar, Jay Rock and Future.

But he was also floating within the major label labyrinth, which often came with financial expectations that put artistic expression in the back seat.

In April 2024, he finally left that system behind, announcing on Instagram that he had left his label and was – for the first time in just over a decade – signed to an independent label in the L.A.-based Good Boy Records.

"It feels scary to go independent, but here we are," he wrote at the time. "Just trying to break free of the algorithm gods gatekeeping art."

This coincided with another transition in Blake leaving Los Angeles. The U.K.-born artist had lived in the city for more than a decade – just about as long as he had been under major labels.

"The whole time I was in L.A., on every call, in every conversation I had about my music, it felt like people were just excited that there was someone famous on it," he recalls. "That's not just because of the fame obsession, but it's also that they're looking out for the shareholders."

When he first moved to L.A., it gave him a "slowness" and a pace of life that was less demanding than in other cities. It's perhaps what L.A. is best known for, but its other, more infamous traits began to show over time.

"I realized at some point, L.A. was for me – and quite a few people who are not native – a sort of rehab where I needed to go to work things out," Blake continues. "It also comes with the corrupt value system of Hollywood, the music industry. … It's a place where there is a system set up to basically drain any talented people who come there financially, right? You just plug into the matrix and that's it. You're just hooked up to the machine."

Despite having a very "privileged" version of the L.A. lifestyle, he still couldn't quite strip himself free of its qualms. This became especially apparent during the pandemic, when many artists in the city – including himself – began to paper over the cracks and were perceived as living as usual.

"I ended up kind of paying everybody else's bills, basically. And then being like, 'how do I pay mine?'" he recalls.

And that's when home beckoned to him.

"Coming back to London was great for me because the industry is not quite the same here, and it's easier to live cheaply," he says.

He also clarifies that the industry and working machine of L.A. are entirely different from the actual city and its people: "I've had some of the happiest moments of my life in L.A. I'm so privileged and feel so grateful that I got to live there."

But he quickly found himself back to square one; back to where it all started. His path had landed him in London, the same city where he'd begun recording music from his bedroom while studying at Goldsmiths University of London.

He says he was in debt on account of paying other people's bills after becoming an independent artist. Eventually, he was able to "steady the ship," and "Trying Times" was born.

"I will stand on the rooftop and shout about it, probably forever. I feel like I never want to stop promoting it," he says of the album.

The album reflects all the turmoil and subsequent tranquility that Blake found within the music. This is perhaps most evident on "Rest of Your Life," which is more reminiscent of his earlier EPs, such as "CMYK," than projects he's put out in the past few years.

It opens with a Dusty Springfield sample because, simply, "I love it." But the rest of the song is anchored by Blake's production and lyrical prowess.

"It's playing on that sort of mantra thing, where it's just this one thing going over and over, going round and round," he says.

This is ever-present in his music. If you look as early as his debut, it's found on "The Wilhelm Scream," where he loops "I don't know about my dreams / I don't know about my dreamin' anymore / All that I know is / I'm fallin', fallin', fallin', fallin' / Might as well fall in."

"By the way, they're not even my lyrics, they're my dad's lyrics," he notes with a smile. "I love those lyrics because they're ambiguous enough, but they're also something that we can apply a meaning to."

Two years later, on "Life Round Here," he repeats, "Everything feels like touchdown on a rainy day."

"What the form of a mantra does is it means that you don't really have to worry about wrapping things up," he explains.

"Sometimes that can be really powerful, because you're allowing the brain to shut off and allow the feelings to come through without stimulating thought. You can let people be in their bodies. You can let people just live in their emotional selves and just not have to compute what you're trying to say."

It creates a hypnotic sound that makes songs flow rather than drone on, especially when backed by Blake's enthralling production.

"The Colour in Anything," an album that he cites as a strong inspiration for "Trying Times," contains "Choose Me," perhaps the pinnacle of this practice. Amid a looping vocal recording, Blake declares distortedly, "I'd rather you choose me."

That retrospective came down to a conversation with his longtime girlfriend, the actor Jameela Jamil, who, after Blake had spent countless hours studying historically successful albums as reference, suggested that the answer for creating "Trying Times" was actually in himself.

"You contain within you the answer to this record," she told him.

What came of it was a far more concise album: "All meat, no fat," he says, before pausing.

"I've said this before, but I'm vegetarian, so I don't know how to use that phrase properly," he jokes.

A particular highlight is "Days Go By," about the inability to be present in life, something that Blake has struggled with in the past. Notably, his previous decisions to tack it up to other, prevalent life circumstances.

"I can't keep blaming the city / I can't keep saying I'm busy / Days on days go by / And nothing gets done," he sings, while an electronically-doused "I love you" loops in the background.

"One of the interesting things about L.A. was, when I moved there, I couldn't really blame the city anymore because I wasn't in an oppressive place," he remembers. "It's a perfect encapsulation of, 'S---, I need to grow, I need to figure this out, and it's not going to happen by just going along with life as it is.'"

But perhaps the best thing to come of the record was that Blake was able to "solve some riddles" that had haunted him for quite some time.

"I started on the road to building a blueprint for what the next phase of the music industry looks like, by partnering with all these companies and discovering new streams of income for artists," he says.

It's something he's long been involved in and advocated for, even participating in the launch of direct-to-consumer music platform vault.fm as a flagship artist in an effort to address royalty issues.

"I'm working on something right now," he says, careful not to reveal too much. "It's just centralizing all of the different parts of the road map that I've been trying to build for myself."

Now, it seems this road map may help to pave the way for newer artists as they endeavor to take the more logistical steps of their careers.

"I'm not someone who's gonna try and lead anything … I'm just pointing at stuff and going, 'That's transparent! Oh, that place doesn't try to own your masters forever!' I'm going, 'I think this is good, they have the right ethics and morals.'"

Robert Viglasky / Netflix / TNS

Cillian Murphy reprises the role of Thomas Shelby in "Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man."

MOVIE REVIEW

'Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man' is a mostly elevated 'Peaky'

By MARK MESZOROS
The News-Herald (Willoughby, Ohio) (TNS)

'Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man'

★★★

MPA rating: R (for violence/bloody images, language throughout, some drug use and nudity)

Running time: 1:52

How to watch: On Netflix

On one hand – perhaps, if you will, a red right hand – "Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man" is, largely, a formidable cinematic successor to "Peaky Blinders," a British period crime drama that debuted on the BBC in 2013 and gained more viewers in these parts after Netflix picked up the show the following year.

With a wider aspect ratio than that of the series, a few big-screen-worthy action sequences and, most importantly, series star and Academy Award winner Cillian Murphy front and center, the film – hitting Netflix this week following a brief theatrical release – delivers much of what a fan would expect.

On the other hand, while watching it, you can't shake the thought that budgetary realities, real life and world history kept the show's creator and the film's screenwriter, Steven Knight, from making it everything a "Peaky" devotee would hope.

After six blood-and-whiskey-soaked seasons, telling a story spanning from 1919 to 1934, "Peaky Blinders" left standing the film's hard-to-kill titular figure, Murphy's Thomas Shelby. The second-oldest of four brothers, Tommy ran the criminal enterprise the Peaky Blinders – based loosely on a real gang – and later worked for the British government to fight the ever-strengthening grip of fascism in Europe.

Set in 1940, as World War II rages, "The Immortal Man" begins with Tommy living in seclusion outside Birmingham, the ghosts that haunt him – both figurative and, it would seem, literal – having only intensified following the off-screen death of his explosive older brother, Arthur. (It seems at the very least possible that the well-documented troubles surrounding Paul Anderson, who portrayed Arthur on the series, led to the actor not being included in the movie. He has, however, voiced support for the film.)

Although he's keeping everyone but the ever-loyal Johnny Dogs (Packy Lee) at arm's length – he talks with his sister, Ada (Sophie Rundle), in her car, declining to let her beyond the gate of his rundown country estate – he's visited in the home by an uninvited guest, a gypsy named Kaulo (Rebecca Ferguson). The twin sister of the late Zelda – the mother of Tommy's first child, son Erasmus – says she's still in contact with her sister and wants Tommy to save the young man. In exchange, she says, she's offering him the long-elusive "peace" he's desired.

Erasmus, better known as "Duke" (Barry Keoghan, taking over the role from series actor Conrad Khan), has filled the power vacuum left by his father. As Ada tells Tommy, Duke is "running the Peaky Blinders like it's 1919 all over again – worse than you and Arthur ever were."

Early on, we see the Duke-led Blinders stealing weapons from a bombed Birmingham factory, with the written permission of the local police chief, in what is a nice callback to the series' beginning.

Even more problematically, Duke is going into business with John Beckett (Tim Roth), treasurer of the British Union of Fascists, who is attempting to help Nazi Germany flood England with counterfeit currency in the hopes of crashing its economy. First, though, Duke must convince Beckett, with more than words, that he's willing to commit this act of treason and all it requires.

Inevitably, Tommy eventually decides to confront Duke, leading to a tug-of-war between Tommy and Beckett for his soul.

The casting in "The Immortal Man" is a mixed bag, with Ferguson ("Dune," "Silo") and Keoghan ("Saltburn," "The Banshees of Inisherin") proving to be excellent additions. The former is bewitching in her confrontations with Tommy – especially when Zelda, seemingly, inhabits her sister's body. And the always-interesting Keoghan, fresh off portraying an unhinged criminal in the recent theatrical release "Crime 101," brings the needed jagged edge to Duke; we aren't sure what the character is capable of at any time.

However, Roth ("Reservoir Dogs," "The Hateful Eight"), simply doesn't have the needed weight to play the film's heavy. Yes, "The Immortal Man" is, ultimately, about father and son, Tommy and Duke, but Roth is a key player. And when you think about the actors who've portrayed Tommy's adversaries on the small screen – including Tom Hardy, Adrien Brody and Sam Claflin, whose Sir Oswald Mosley, a fascist, is still alive at the end of the series – Roth is a letdown as this forgettable foe.

Nevertheless, with Murphy ("Oppenheimer," "A Quiet Place Part II"), "The Immortal Man" has most of the firepower it needs. The actor slips the familiar, comfortable glove that is Tommy Shelby back onto that red right hand with great ease and is dynamite opposite Keoghan.

That second, arguably gratuitous reference to Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds' "Red Right Hand" – a song synonymous with the series, serving as its opening theme for much of its run and being used in one form or another throughout its run – brings us to the film's music, which rocks. A version of that song is featured, of course, but the movie is stuffed with impactful songs and a fine score by composer and creative music supervisor Antony Genn.

Seasoned with enough background for a newcomer to follow its story and nicely directed by Tom Harper, who helmed the final three episodes of the show's first season, "The Immortal Man" does not appear to be the swan song for "Peaky Blinders." Netflix has confirmed that a sequel series, set in the 1950s, is on the way.

As we wait on casting announcements, we're happy to know "Peaky" will rock on.

MOVIE REVIEW

'Ready or Not 2: Here I Come' stuck with rules of the game

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service (TNS)

'Ready Or Not 2: Here I Come'

★★

MPA rating: R (for strong bloody violence, gore, pervasive language and brief drug use)

Running time: 1:48

How to watch: In theaters

It has never been easier to believe that an international cabal of billionaires regularly exploit the bodies of young girls and women. In fact, there are files upon files of evidence about such activity now readily available for public perusal. But back in 2019, when "Ready or Not" was released, this was the territory of the conspiracy theorist.

The action-horror-comedy, made by the filmmaking team known as Radio Silence, followed a young bride, Grace (Samara Weaving), fending off her brand-new in-laws in a bloodthirsty game of hide-and-seek on her wedding night, a kind of initiation ritual. That premise is scary enough, but in the climax, things got supernaturally satanic, in a goofy way.

So in the sequel "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come," the rules of the game have already been established, and in this world (spoiler alert), the wealthy Satan worshippers explode like bloody water balloons when they lose, or cheat. Now, the franchise is married to the gimmick, which unfortunately saps any incisive "eat the rich" cultural commentary – why make the devil real, when the real devilry is all too human? Wouldn't it be more cutting to reveal that their fears and rules are a constructed belief that has no otherworldly enforcement?

But that's not what "Ready or Not" is and that is decidedly not what "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come" is either. The sequel, once again co-written and directed by Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, co-written by Guy Busick and R. Christopher Murphy, doubles down in every way, and especially on the blood balloon bodies. Picking up right when the first one ends, we now have two Bambi-eyed blonds, our battered bride Grace, and her estranged sister Faith (Kathryn Newton). We now have not just one family trying to kill the bride, but an international coalition of powerful families vying to do so.

Elijah Wood shows up to explain the rules and bylaws of the cult that lead to such a battle royale, but essentially, a power vacuum is left when Grace bested the Le Domas family in the first movie, and so a powerful patriarch (David Cronenberg) arranges it so that his twins Ursula and Titus (Sarah Michelle Gellar and Shawn Hatosy) can fight it out to gain control of the global satanic cult. Grace and Faith are drugged and dumped on the golf course of a resort repurposed for this event, where they will win if they can survive until sunrise. Grace is still wearing her bloodied wedding gown and yellow Chuck Taylors from the first movie for her second round of hide-and-seek.

Pief Weyman / Searchlight Pictures / TNS

Kathryn Newton, left, and Samara Weaving in "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come."

There is something fun about a "Most Dangerous Game" kind of story, and "Ready or Not 2" does bear flashes of that, when it's not bogged down by all of the satanic lore. The sisters get to work out their issues while dodging attempted murder by the families, with a few cheeky nods to wedding rituals, like an inspired dance floor brawl set to "Total Eclipse of the Heart." It's also nice to see how much reverence Radio Silence (who also made the only good "Scream" reboot movies) have for '90s horror icons, in casting the iconic Canadian body horror king Cronenberg, the vampire slayer herself Gellar, and Hatosy, of "The Faculty."

But the rest of the film is light on character and heavy on concept and exposition. Newton has the most to work with as the spunky, snappy younger sister who just wants her big sis to stick around for once and delivers the best performance. Weaving's Grace is frazzled and nerve-shredded playing death games for the second night in a row. Weaving is mostly stuck in one gear: quivering and panicky.

Maybe it's just the current era, seven years after the original, but the flip tone paired with psychotically extreme violence just doesn't ironically mesh the way it used to. The snarky, sardonic attitude feels outdated, and it's disturbing to see our young heroines battered by Titus and the cult members so intensely, even if it does ultimately justify their viscera-soaked comeuppance.

Back in 2019, "Ready or Not" was a high-concept fear-fantasy executed with outlandish supernatural splatter (for better or for worse). It was even on the money with its evil oligarch themes. But "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come" feels behind the ball, not ahead of the game, and unfortunately, this is no escapist, or even cathartic, horror romp. Read the news instead if you'd like a real scare.

Amy Sussman / Getty Images / TNS

Snow Tha Product attends the 2024 Billboard Women In Music at YouTube Theater on March 6, 2024, in Inglewood, California.

How Snow Tha Product's newfound freedom inspired her latest album

By CHARLIE VARGAS
The Orange County Register (TNS)

Q&A

SNOW THA PRODUCT

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Mexican American rapper Snow Tha Product is crashing out and suspects you probably are, too.

"Whether it's just the overall stress of the current political climate or even the simple things that come with handling life, it can weigh on you," the rapper said over a Zoom call. "I'm pretty sure everybody can relate to the feeling of looking at our parents now that we're adults and realizing they may not have had everything as together as we thought."

Snow, whose real name is Claudia Alexandra Madriz Meza, centers these tumultuous feelings on her latest record, "Before I Crash Out," which she released independently in Dec. 12. Rather than let the waves of emotion pull her down into an ocean of despair, she invites listeners to ride them with her, with razor-sharp verses anchored in reality with a touch of humor to help lighten the mood.

The album comes four years after her 2022 release, "To Anywhere." Although it seems like a long pause, she said it was a much-needed one, given a mindset and schedule that prioritized releasing new singles and booking guests on her podcast over having fun and creating music that brought her fulfillment.

"I really was gonna crash out," she said. "I just wanted to have one place to put everything, because I'm very scatterbrained, and my ADHD gets the best of me. It was fun having a conceptual type of project. I almost feel like I just came back, and now I'm going to do more concepts and tours."

Snow Tha Product will be promoting her new record on her tour, which kicks off at the Riverside Municipal Auditorium in Riverside on March 19, and will circle back to The Novo in Los Angeles on May 8 and SOMA in San Diego on May 9.

"I love the Inland Empire and I've always thought it's interesting how many creatives come from there," Snow said. "I'm excited that I get to try some new things out. I've got more dancers, lights, and more of a show. I'm not popping champagne on this tour as much, but I want to bring a mariachi to some of the cities and really make these shows count."

The 26-track album is charged with political commentary and Latin American identity issues, all while featuring R&B, regional Mexican, and EDM sounds, showcasing Snow's versatility that extends beyond her word-smithing.

Her pop single, "Sabado," was released in August, sparking conversations online about her critique of Latinos who voted for Donald Trump in the 2024 presidential election. Other songs, such as "Mad at Me Again," keep on with the theme, with her singing she'll repatriate to Mexico while jabbing back at supporters of mass deportation.

Snow also takes some time to look inward at the conditions of growing up in Latina households that are often overlooked. In "She Wasn't Home," Snow takes listeners through the abuse that teenage girls experience in their own homes. Then, in another song, "Sorry X Tus Suegros," she preemptively apologizes to a partner for her parents' homophobia.

Before Snow gets ready to embark on her nationwide tour to support the album, we spoke with her about how she regulates her nervous system, what she believes the future of the Latino community in politics will be, and more. This interview has been edited for space and clarity.

Q: You've been outspoken on political issues, and your single "Sabado" took issue with Latinos who voted for Donald Trump. Can you talk about that?

SNOW: I think the big thing that happened was some people lost empathy for the people who look like them. Some people voted against people who look just like their mothers. I had conversations with other artists and Mexican men who would yell at me about how they had to vote for Trump, while their parents were undocumented. That's when I knew this was crazy and different. This is not just that the Democrats lost them. It's something that was built into the culture for years. I think it's part of the selfishness, the lack of empathy, and the dire need for money over character, morals, ethics, and humanity. Unfortunately, it's a culmination of capitalism and what the United States was built on.

Q: Where do you feel like you fit in as an artist when it comes to speaking about cultural issues?

SNOW: I represent a lot of different communities, and I defend them. I hope to be good to them while simultaneously just trying to be a complete person with empathy. I'm a mother raising a son, a wife, and a sister, and all of these things are important to me. I think that's important to share in a world that's nonchalant.

Q: Your raps feature some pretty sharp lyrics. When you walk into a studio, do you have a target in mind you're aiming those words at?

SNOW: From the beginning of my career, rap has been my form of expression. The genre comes from poverty, hardship, struggle, but also from people just needing to get those feelings out, and sometimes by being fun. For me, it's a way to vent and take it into my day-to-day life. Once I put it out there, I get to move on with my emotions. It is my form of therapy, and that's what this project is. I have some happy, inspirational, angry, funny and aggressive songs.

Q: This album features cumbia, R&B, regional Mexican, EDM, and other genres. How did those come to be included?

SNOW: Being as ADHD as I am and multifaceted, I feel the freest right now. There is this level of freedom that comes from genuinely not caring as much about what people might say, whereas before I think I maybe secretly did. I can talk about whatever I want and do whatever genre I want. I'm independent. I don't have a manager. I get to wake up every day, and it's a surprise. That's inspiring and exciting because, after being in this industry for so long, you can get bored with it. It's not that fun if you're always being told what you can and can't do.

Q: When did you start to notice that newfound freedom you're describing?

SNOW: I think it took those four years between dropping the new album. I felt so strongly about my 'To Anywhere' project that maybe that's why I took four years before dropping music. I feel like it was so overlooked, and it was so good. That project was too good to be ignored, and it broke my heart for a while that it went down like that. Then I had to rebuild slowly, and it finally reminded me that I'm making the music, and I should do whatever genre I want, regardless of what people say. At the end of the day, I do this for me and my fans.

Q: How do you calm yourself when you feel overwhelmed?

SNOW: I do multiple things. I'm neurodivergent. I have ADHD. So some days, what works for me is meditating, the gym, and some days it's a rage room that I built in my house. So whatever lets me blow off steam and could be productive is probably the best way. Some days you want to break stuff, and you'd rather do it in a rage room so you don't get arrested.

Q: What does your rage room look like?

SNOW: There's graffiti, bats, TVs, glass, plates, furniture and lamps. Just about anything you can think of, I've probably broken it there. There's even stuff that maybe I'm already getting rid of. I've also invited fans to rage with me to shoot content, which is pretty fun. There was a microphone we lit on fire while I was rapping on it.

Q: You reference your neurodiversity in your music and are very open about it. When did you start embracing it?

SNOW: I've been very open about my depression and anxiety. A lot of my depression came from not being accepted because my brain works differently. I realized a lot of my anxiety came from being told I shouldn't be so hyper, loud, and direct by saying every idea that comes to my head. That starts to depress you, because you hate how you are and how your brain works, so you start fighting yourself. The more I'm vocal about it, the more I can tell people they can find a way to work with their brain and be successful and live a full life. I'd tell people to give themselves grace, and that can be magic.

BOOKS

Can you write novels if you don't read them?

Tim Blake Nelson doesn't think so

ABOVE: Actor Tim Blake Nelson attends the LA premiere of Lionsgate's "The Housemaid" at the TCL Chinese theatre in Los Angeles, on Dec. 15, 2025.

Patrick T. Fallon / AFP via Getty Images / TNS

By SAMANTHA DUNN
The Orange County Register (TNS)

Although he's found success as a producer, director and writer (more on that in a sec), Tim Blake Nelson might be best known as an actor who steals scenes with his ability to convey depth and complexity in even the – let's just say it – weirdest secondary characters.

Think dunderheaded Delmar in "O Brother, Where Art Thou?," cruel Dr. Pendanski in "Holes," the singing, smiling, sociopathic title character in "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs," and most recently, ill-fated Dale Washberg in the FX series "The Lowdown." We could go on – after all, he has more than 100 screen credits to his name.

But in Hollywood, Nelson is also known as an actor so serious about his craft that he asks even big-name directors like the Coen Brothers to see the script before he agrees to take a role – for no other reason than he wants to make sure his thespian skills are up to the demands of the part.

When you understand this, you understand why Nelson says he didn't even try to write a novel until he felt he had read enough of them to be up to the task.

"I've always wanted to write novels, but I didn't feel I was ready until my 50s," Nelson says in the upcoming March 20 episode of the virtual program Bookish, produced by the Southern California News Group.

On the program, he will be discussing his writing process for his second novel, "Superhero," a propulsive read and a wicked satire, that, like his debut novel "City of Blows," delves into the absurdities of modern filmmaking. But while the first novel was a send-up of indie filmmaking, this one takes on the bloated enterprise of superhero franchises.

"While I was writing plays and screenplays, I mused about writing a novel but never dared try it, just because I didn't feel I was ready. I hadn't read enough," says Nelson, speaking via Zoom from his guitar-and-book-filled home office in Manhattan.

To put his amount of book reading in perspective: He has a bachelor of arts in the classics from Brown University, and then went on to study at Juilliard. But as he tells it, his real literary education started much earlier – at the dining room table of his childhood home in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"I grew up in a kind of intellectual boot camp, all because my oldest brother received an A on a paper that, when my mother read it, she concluded that he should have received, at best, a C. And that, therefore, we weren't being taught to write sufficiently," he recalls. "And this was a really good school in Tulsa, and even that wasn't good enough for our mother."

From there on out, says Nelson, he and his siblings were assigned to read books outside of school, "and asked to deliver concise talks, short summaries of them at the table – both in terms of plot and theme." On top of that, the Nelson children were also assigned five paragraphs a week on the topics of their choice, which were then read by their parents. "There were four of us, so they alternated; each took two a week and would critique the writing. And if you didn't get a passing grade, then that was one of your paragraphs for the next week, and you had to rewrite it."

With that kind of hardwiring, no wonder Nelson says, "Personally, when I set out to write a book, I want to pursue that as deeply as possible. I also want to challenge the reader with language."

That's important, he believes, because contrary to what we might see in the culture at large (think online memes and such), among people who enjoy reading "there's a vestige of an appreciation for language" that still exists.

Nelson is quick to point out not only how difficult making a living in the arts is, but how fortunate he is to have had the chance to do it all his life. He says he "never hides" his good fortune.

"I got to go to school until I was 26, and graduated without any debt, which is an incredible, incredible advantage," he says. "And I'm grateful to have grown up in a family that not only had the wisdom, and I think the smart values in terms of prizing education, but also the means to support our pursuit of it, no matter how far we wanted to go. So I did four years of college, and then four years of actor training."

He knows that kind of consistent support is rare, yet necessary for any long-term success in the arts.

"I think the difficult aspect of the arts, and this includes writing novels, is that you also need other people to believe in what it is you're up to," says Nelson. "You need to get hired as an actor, and certainly as a playwright and a filmmaker; I've needed theaters to want to put stuff on, and financiers to want to put money into the movies."

As a playwright, his works include "Eye of God," "The Grey Zone" and "Anadarko." He also directed film versions of two of his plays, as well as the 2001 film "O," a modern-day retelling of Shakespeare's "Othello."

"I've been very blessed to find the people who'd wanted to hire me and support the work – and in terms of the novels, it's not a big-money game so much anymore for contemporary fiction and literature, which is the pool in which I'm really trying to swim. And so, getting somebody to invest in you and publish your book is also something, and I'm just very grateful for the opportunities I've had."

But even as hard as it is to build a career out of writing books or making movies, Nelson believes that for people who feel the calling, there's nothing else as satisfying – a theme that shows up in both of his novels. It's also a lesson he's imparted to his son, Henry, with whom he collaborated to make the 2023 film "Asleep in My Palm."

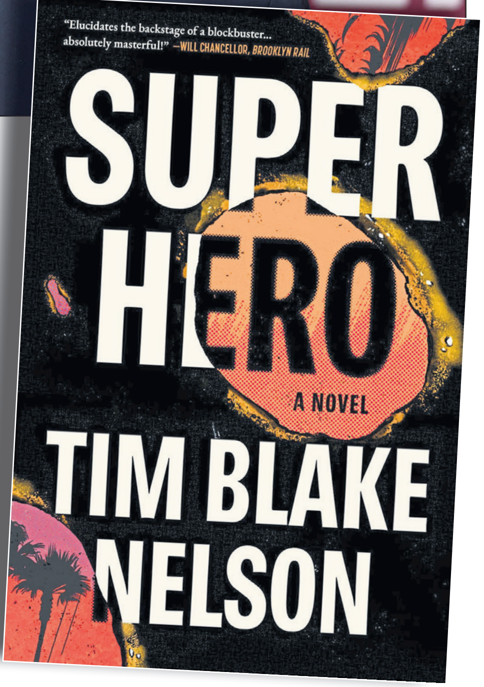
"I used to bring him onto sets when he was growing up, and then he started to crew on movies on which I worked, so he really worked his way up," says Nelson, who remembers telling Henry, "One thing I can say about movie sets, more than any other work environment I've encountered, is that pretty much everyone you see is exactly where they want to be. They're living the life that they want to live. And it is very self-selective in that way, because there's not a lot of glamour in making movies."

Well, there is glamour for certain people in the movie-making business, but it comes with a lot of complications, as his novel "Superhero" astutely details.

"But for most, for 98 percent of the people working on a movie, they're very long days," Nelson says. "The work is tedious … you're putting up with a lot during those 12-, and for many of the crew, 14- to 16-hour days. And so the people who end up on movie sets doing that work really want to be there."

In the end, Nelson says you have to "really love the process, in spite of all the other stuff."

"Superhero" sits at the intersection of Nelson's love both of movies and of novels: "Every story, everything that happens in the novel, is something I either experienced myself, or heard tell from a very reliable source who experienced it. Even though it has satirical elements, and maybe a little bit of exaggeration, it's as true a book about the making of movies as I know how to write at this particular moment."


"Elucidates the backstage of a blockbuster… absolutely masterful!" —WILL CHANCELLOR, BROOKLYN RAIL
SUPER HERO
A NOVEL
TIM BLAKE NELSON

The Unnamed Press / TNS

BESTSELLERS

Here are the bestsellers for the week that ended Saturday, March 7, compiled from data from independent and chain bookstores, book wholesalers and independent distributors nationwide, powered by Circana BookScan.

Hardcover fiction

1. The Correspondent. Virginia Evans. Crown
2. Dire Bound. Sable Sorensen. Requited
3. Felicia's Favorites. Danielle Steel. Delacorte
4. My Husband's Wife. Alice Feeney. Pine & Cedar
5. Between Two Fires. Christopher Buehlman. Tor Nightfire
6. Kin. Tayari Jones. Knopf
7. The Crossroads C.J. Box Putnam
8. Cross and Sampson. Patterson/Sitts. Little, Brown
9. When He Was Wicked (deluxe ed.). Julia Quinn. Avon
10. Alchemised. SenLinYu. Del Rey

Hardcover nonfiction

1. You with the Sad Eyes. Christina Applegate. Little, Brown
2. The King Is Coming. John Bevere. Thomas Nelson
3. Stripped Down. Bunnie Xo. Dey Street
4. Maxi's Kitchen. Maxine Sharf. Clarkson Potter
5. The High-Protein Plate. Rachael DeVaux. Simon Element
6. If the Tree Could Speak. Tebow/Edwards. Thomas Nelson
7. Nobody's Girl. Virginia Roberts Giuffre. Knopf
8. The Lie You Don't Know You Believe. Jennie Allen. Thomas Nelson
9. The Hunger Code. Jason Fung. Greystone
10. We the Women. Norah O'Donnell. Ballantine

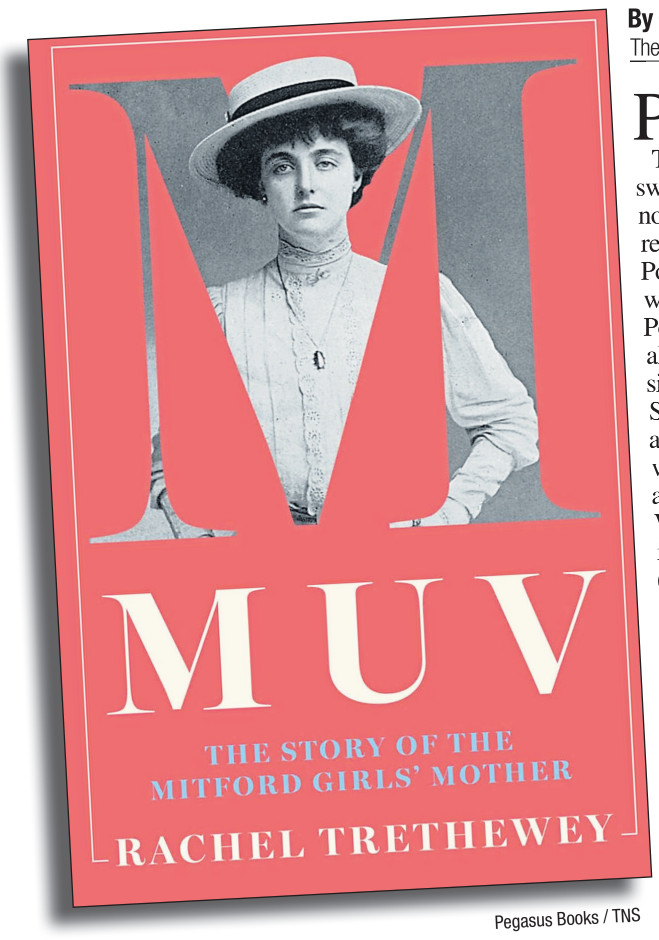
Trade paperback

1. Theo of Golden. Allen Levi. Atria
2. Just Friends. Haley Pham. Atria
3. Want to Know a Secret? Freida McFadden. Poisoned Pen
4. Dear Debbie. Freida McFadden. Poisoned Pen
5. In Her Own League. Liz Tomforde. Amara
6. Chainsaw Man, Vol. 20. Tatsuki Fujimoto. Viz
7. Dungeon Crawler Carl. Matt Dinniman. Ace
8. Strange Buildings. Uketsu. HarperVia
9. Across the Vanishing Sky. Catherine Cowles. Bloom
10. Woman Down. Colleen Hoover. Montlake

Reprinted from Publishers Weekly.

REVIEW

Book tells the wild story of the 'Outrageous!' sisters' mom



Pegasus Books / TNS

By CHRIS HEWITT
The Minnesota Star Tribune (TNS)

Pop culture is having a Mitfordmania era.

The Mitford family, midcentury British swells who achieved various levels of notoriety, have been the subject of several recent hits. Released late last year, Mimi Pond's graphic novel, " Do Admit," was about both the eccentric family and Pond's obsession with them. There's also "The Six," a 2017 biography of sisters who came of age in the 1940s. Streaming TV series "Outrageous!" is about the six eccentric sisters, two of whom grew up to become bestselling authors (Jessica wrote "The American Way of Death" and Nancy wrote "Love in a Cold Climate") and two of whom (Diana and Unity) became pals of Adolf Hitler, with Diana getting married in Joseph Goebbels' house.

Turns out there were more fans of fascism in the wealthy family. The sisters' mother, Lady Sydney Redesdale – whom the girls nicknamed "muv" (their father was "farve") – was also on board. "Muv," as Rachel Trethewey's biography of Redesdale is called, was not as rabidly pro-Nazi as her daughters but, always politically conservative, she supported Hitler and thought he had "a nice face."

The most appealing thing about "Muv" is its nuanced portrayal of its troubling subject, whose contradictory behavior often took the path of least resistance (as when she decided not to tell both writer daughters that she objected to their portrayals of her in their work, trying to avoid conflict that bubbled up, anyway). As Trethewey asks in her introduction, "Should she be outlawed because of her support for Hitler, or can we abhor her views while feeling sympathy for the family tragedies she faced?"

Trethewey takes the latter view, detailing those tragedies, including children and grandchildren who predeceased her, separation from her husband (over Hitler), financial reversals and a long battle with Parkinson's disease. By helping us understand the impact of Victorian-era parenting methods (basically: see the kids at breakfast and then let Nanny take over) and of Muv's awareness that her opinionated children had temperaments inherited from her, Tretheway's interpretation seems like the closest we'll get to what Muv was like, given that almost everything we know about her comes not from her but from observers.

With few primary sources, Trethewey leans hard on the daughter's fictional accounts of their mother, which gets "Muv" into trouble. Trethewey assumes the details of Nancy's loosely autobiographical novels are factual, which is a leap. But Trethewey also complains that the fictional versions are inaccurate: "By downplaying Sydney's politics, the portrayal of Aunt Sadie [the Muv character in two novels] loses the essence of who Sydney really was." The biographer can't have it both ways.

It's defensible to lean on the daughters' published material but I wish Trethewey were more circumspect in how she uses it. I do admire how complicated her portrait of Muv is, and the way she captures how relationships with parents change when we gain a deeper understanding of their humanity – as when Jessica, who has been estranged from her mother for long periods of time, greets Muv after a long journey from England to Jessica's San Francisco home.

"When Sydney got off the aeroplane, looking exhausted and more vulnerable than her daughter remembered, Jessica's attitude towards her became more sympathetic," writes Trethewey.

The book is a welcome corrective to the blame-mom-for-everything syndrome it would be easy to fall into with the Mitfords, especially since just about everyone in the family did blame Muv. Readers will condemn her for some stuff, too (like not believing in medicine, which led to her grandchild's death). But the complicated people she raised are testament to the fact that she must have done something right.

AUTOMOTIVE

AUTO REVIEWS

Chevy Bolt 2.0 is back ‘n’ better

By HENRY PAYNE
The Detroit News (TNS)

Henry Payne / The Detroit News / TNS

The 2027 Chevy Bolt charges alongside Teslas at a Tesla charging station.

My 2027 Chevrolet Bolt tester is a cutie. Dressed in Habanero Orange, it merged onto Highway 101. ZOT! I nailed the throttle and instant electric torque launched me like, well, a bolt into early morning traffic north of Los Angeles.

“Hey, Google,” I barked while looking at the 13 percent state of battery charge. “Take me to a charging station.”

A Tesla station four miles away in Agoura Hills popped up on the 11-inch infotainment screen. I punched the NAVIGATE TO button, then self-drive.

The wheel glowed green and I removed my hands while Habanero Bolt took over driving duties at 70 mph. I reached into my grocery bag (stored in the spacious console tray at my feet) and pulled out a Snapple. The wee Chevy automatically moved to the left lane to pass slower traffic, then methodically worked its way right across three lanes before handing the driving duties back to me at my freeway exit. Thanks, buddy.

ZOT! I was back on the throttle ‘round a cloverleaf. Fun, fun, fun. In its second generation, Bolt has finally come into its own.

Born for the 2017 model year as GM’s first all-electric car, Bolt carried outsized expectations on its small, subcompact shoulders. With government EV mandates looming, GM thrust Bolt into the spotlight as an industry-changing pioneer. Take a ride down last decade’s memory lane:

■ CHEVY BOLT SALES CRUSHING TESLA MODEL 3 SALES – Business Insider

■ APPLE’S STEVE WOZNIAK LIKES CHEVY BOLT EV BETTER THAN TESLA MODEL 3 – Yahoo! Autos

■ BILL NYE THE SCIENCE GUY BUYS A 2017 BOLT EV – GM Authority

■ GAME CHANGER? EV CHEVY BOLT NAMED 2017 CAR OF THE YEAR – NBC News

Reality never lived up to the hype. While Tesla’s iPhone-on-wheels became a six-figure sales sensation, Bolt became a niche product (like other EVs), as you would expect from a front-wheel-drive subcompact.

It averaged 25,000 sales a year before Chevy canceled it in 2023. But like good niche cars (think Ford Mustang, Chrysler Pacifica, Mazda Miata), Bolt had built a passionate fan base (including GM CEO and Bolt owner Mary Barra), which demanded the cutie’s return.

Bolt is back for 2027. Not as a revolution, but as a fun urban car in Skittle colors.

Gone is the OG Bolt hatchback that split duty with its more SUV-like Bolt EUV (electric utility vehicle) twin beginning in 2022. The ‘27 Bolt is the EUV carry-over. Like the terrific $23,495 Trax subcompact that is the appetizer to Chevrolet’s internal-combustion-engine SUV menu, the entry-level $28,995 Bolt is head-turning, roomy, loaded with standard features. Among my favorite Chevy features? Thoughtful steering wheel ergonomics with a raised toggle for adaptive cruise control on the front spoke, and buttons for volume/station tuning on the back side.

Unlike Trax, the pricier Bolt is more premium like other Chevy EV entrees Equinox, Blazer and Silverado (consistent with the higher incomes of EV buyers). Compared to Trax, it has 25 percent better acceleration, 40 percent less driving range, hand-free driving capability, clever storage cubbies, no Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, and state-of-the-art Google Built-in to map your charging trips.

In short, Bolt is a big personality for the small EV segment.

Reintroducing itself as the industry’s cheapest EV, Bolt undercuts the (also much-improved) Nissan Leaf by $2,500. But Bolt is hardly a cheap build. It’s the lowest-priced vehicle to offer hands-free driving (Super Cruise) in the market (optioned at $32K).

That’s a healthy $6K under Tesla (which offers its hands-free (Full Self-Driving) feature for $99 a month), and a smart way for GM to introduce an addictive, high-tech feature available across its Chevy/Cadillac/GMC lineup.

I’m addicted.

I’ve owned FSD in all three of my Teslas, and GM’s tech is not far behind. The General has been more cautious in building out its Super Cruise network of mapped roads – whereas my Model 3 will self-drive as soon as I leave the driveway. But Bolt’s state-of-the-art Super Cruise 2.0 (with OTA updates) is adding more secondary roads to complement divided highways.

Super Cruise helped take the stress out of crowded LA highway driving. The kids love it, but so do seniors who are attracted to self-driving as a backup safety driver.

Turn off Super Cruise and Bolt comes to life with its short wheelbase and peppy torque. No wonder Chevy has introduced new colors for Gen 2 including Habanero, Atomic Yellow (my favorite) and Marina Blue.

Sounds like the ol’ Ford Focus ST, yes? I like the hot hatch analogy. Dress Bolt in Skittle colors and a new-for-2027 blacked-out RS package, and Bolt won’t be out of place as a local autocross, where its instant torque might torch an unsuspecting ST. I autocrossed a Bolt back in 2016 and had a blast.

Most Bolt owners will use it as an urban driver. I squeezed its small size into a crowded LA convenience store lot (try that in a Silverado EV) and easily sat behind myself with 39 inches of rear-seat room (three inches better than my favorite Mazda CX-30 subcompact SUV).

Those who venture beyond the ‘burbs will welcome Bolt’s much-improved charging speed and access to Tesla chargers with a standard NACS charging port. Sure, some will miss Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, but Google Built-in is a better EV fit.

“Hey Google, navigate to Las Vegas,” I commanded.

Google Built-in immediately charted my seven-hour, 15-minute journey, including two charging stops. That’s 1.15 hours longer than, say, a Trax ICE would make the trip – a reminder of EV road trip shortcomings. In California, fast charging is more expensive than gas (even at $5.33 a gallon, per AAA).

The Agoura Hills charger, for example, cost 72 cents per kWh, which means a Bolt would set you back $72 to fill for a 300-mile trip compared to Trax at $50 (and that’s not including common congestion charges that can increase EV rates by 50 percent). Rates are cheaper in Michigan, but – at 37 cents/kWh – a Bolt would cost $37 on a 300-mile road trip versus the Trax’s $32 at $3.50-a-gallon gas. Ouch.

Google Built-in makes trips a heckuva lot easier than just a few years ago, though, when I had to consult a third-party app to make a trip. Worse, Bolt could only charge at a snail-like 55 kW at so-called CCS charging stations. While shivering at a West Branch CCS charger in the back of a Ford dealer parking lot in January 2024, a couple rolled up in their gen-one Bolt on the way to the UP with just 10 percent of range left.

They had a looooong night ahead.

My 2027 tester, meanwhile, filled up much more quickly at (up to) 150 kWh at the Tesla charger (10-80 percent in 25 minutes assuming minimal congestion) which is not much different than I’ve experienced with my Model 3 (thought the latter can hit peaks of 250 kW). Bolt has also caught up with the Tesla with a Lithium-ion Phosphate battery that can be charged to 100 percent without battery degradation (compared to 80 percent on Gen 1).

Payne, all this EV minutiae is making my brain hurt! I’m buying ICE!

I get it, dear reader, which is why the more-efficient Trax has outsold Bolt 5:1. But for the EV faithful, Bolt 2.0 is a better buy. Just look for the Skittle colors.

Henry Payne is auto critic for The Detroit News.

2027 Chevrolet Bolt EV

★★★

Vehicle type: Battery-powered, front-wheel-drive, five-passenger hatchback

Price: $29,995, including $1,395 destination fee ($38,990 RS as tested)

Powerplant: 65 kWh lithium-iron-phosphate battery with single-electric-motor drive

Power: 210 horsepower, 169 pound-feet of torque

Transmission: Single-speed automatic

Performance: 0-60 mph, 6.8 seconds (Car and Driver est.); top speed, 93 mph

Weight: 3,776 pounds

Fuel economy: EPA est. (NA); range, 262 miles

Report card

Highs: Perky acceleration, high-tech tools

Lows: No AWD for Michigan winters; $6K more than gas Trax

2026 Dodge Charger Sedan will change your mind about owning an SUV

By LARRY PRINTZ
Tribune News Service (TNS)

Stellantis / TNS

In the golden age of the full-size American sedan, one could measure his worth by the length of his car. That was when Detroit understood that Americans required elbow room, not because we were all large, but because freedom demands acreage. The bench seat of a Chevrolet Caprice was a prairie; courtships were conducted on them. And fuel economy? it was measured in gallons per mile, and we liked it that way. Gas was cheap and highways were broad.

But empires fall, and so did the American sedan.

First comes the oil crises, which introduces the radical notion that gasoline might not always cost the same as a pack of chewing gum. Then come the engineers for whom efficiency mattered above all else. Sedans shrank. Styling surrenders to aerodynamics. Bench seats split into buckets. The trunk, once capable of holding your life’s hopes and dreams, could now barely accommodate a gym bag and your disappointment.

At the same time, automakers discover that if you jacked up a station wagon, bolted on some plastic cladding, and marketed it as rugged, buyers will line up as if it’s the Second Coming on all-terrain tires. The SUV arrives not as a vehicle, but as a cultural correction. Why drive a sophisticated land yacht when you could command a childish suburban assault vehicle? One by one, the old titans fade away.

The Chevrolet Impala quietly retires, as if sent to a nice dealership upstate. The Ford Crown Victoria slips into the mist. Even the stately Toyota Avalon, proof that the Japanese could build a proper American living room on wheels, leaves this world for the mythical afterlife paradise it’s named for. Today, roads teem with crossovers, vehicles that are practical, versatile and as emotionally stirring as a well-insulated thermos. The full-size sedan’s demise comes not with a bang, but with a quarterly earnings call. No funeral, no parade; just a press release about consumer preferences.

You already know the Dodge Charger’s headlines. First came the 670-horsepower 2026 Charger Daytona EV, an electric muscle car that moves with the quiet menace of a nuclear submarine. Then the 550-horsepower Scat Pack arrived, hauling around a High-Output 3.0-liter twin-turbo Hurricane inline-six. But those are merely the warm-up acts. The real show is the 420-horsepower Charger R/T, running the Standard Output version of that same twin-turbo six, paired with an eight-speed ZF gearbox and all-wheel drive so that all four tires can share equally in the delinquency.

Dodge’s newest rendition of the Charger adds an extra set of doors. Yes, the American full-size sedan survives, now a proud member of the smallest car segment in the industry: itself. The sedan and coupe are the same size; the only difference is how many doors interrupt its sides. Rear-seat legroom is identical at 37.7 inches, which is ample space for teenagers to ignore you. As in the coupe, the driver faces a 10.25 or 16-inch instrument cluster, depending on trim, alongside a 12.3-inch infotainment touchscreen, wireless smartphone charging, USB-C ports, wireless Apple Car Play and Android Auto.

Dodge figures the 2026 Charger R/T Sedan will be the one most people actually buy, starting at $51,995. If you believe doors are a government conspiracy, you can delete two of them and save $2,000. Democracy in action.

Opting for the R/T doesn’t mean you’re settling. This is still a Dodge muscle car, which is to say it has 420 horsepower and 468 pound-feet of torque. Sixty miles per hour arrives in 4.6 seconds, a mere 0.7 seconds behind the Scat Pack, which is the sort of difference detectable only by fighter pilots and men who revere their socket sets. The quarter mile disappears in 12.9 seconds, which is quicker than most New Year’s resolutions.

The driveline is stout off the line and civilized at speed, like a bouncer who reads Tolstoy. The long wheelbase gives the Charger a planted, substantial feel. It doesn’t so much drive down the road as annex it.

My test car came with the $2,995 Performance Handling Group, which includes the usual assortment of go-fast trinkets, a sport-tuned suspension, and Pirelli P275/40ZR20 all-season tires. On the slightly rippled pavement of Vermont’s Green Mountains, the ride could get somewhat jittery, less grand touring and more espresso with an attitude. A little more compliance wouldn’t have hurt.

But when the road turned twisty, and then snowy, because this is New England and winter is a lifestyle choice, the Charger hunkered down and behaved itself admirably. At the Team O’Neil Rally School in Dalton, New Hampshire, it handled snow-covered skidpads and slalom courses with surprising composure. This is not your uncle’s fair-weather muscle car that sulks at the first sight of a snowflake. In foul weather, it’s as competent as an SUV, only without looking like it was designed by an orthopedic footwear consortium.

And yes, it has a rear hatch swallowing more than 37 cubic feet of gym bags, Costco runs, and the excess baggage of modern existence.

While the rest of the industry has been busy designing sensible footwear for the soul, Dodge, bless their red-blooded, Hemi-thumping heart, has remembered that a full-size sedan can be a declaration of independence on four wheels. The 2026 Dodge Charger R/T Sedan is one-of-a-kind, proving to be gloriously big, loud, long, wide, sexy and unapologetically American. Thank goodness.

Larry Printz is an automotive journalist based in South Florida.

2026 Dodge Charger R/T Sedan

Base price: $51,995

Engine: Twin-turbocharged3.0-liter inline six-cylinder

Horsepower/Torque: 420/468 pound-feet

EPA rating: Not available

Fuel required: Premium unleaded

Length/Width/Height: 207/84/80 inches

Ground clearance: 5.5 inches

Payload: Not avallabile

Cargo capacity: 23-37 cubic feet

Towing capacity: Not rated

TECHNOLOGY

GADGETS

Taking MagSafe to a new level

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service (TNS)

Aulumu's **G09 Infinite Rotation Dual-Mag Stand** takes MagSafe use to a new level. The 3-axis smartphone stand, touted as the first of its kind, delivers viewing from any angle with its 360-degree ball joint.

If you're not familiar with MagSafe (and so many people aren't), then you need to be. MagSafe is a magnetic feature designed by Apple for iPhone 12s and newer. On the back of the phone is a ring of magnets, perfectly aligned to attach a MagSafe charger for 15 watts of wireless charging. In addition to charging, MagSafe accessories can be attached to work as stands, wallets, etc.

The G09 Infinite Rotation Dual-Mag Stand features 3-axis rotation for a full 360-degree range. Taking it on or off is magnetic. And have no fear, it won' t fall off on its own with its dual-sided magnetic attachment design. In addition to compatible smartphones, the G09 will attach itself to walls, appliances, game controllers and magnetic plates.

When you first pick up the G09, you can see how well-built it is, with an aluminum alloy construction that's sturdy and strong. As a stand, the pocket-sized (0.27 by 2.6 by 2.4 inches) G09 has a slim profile and provides endless angles for hands-free use, displaying recipes on the countertop, mounted to the side of your laptop, or on exercise equipment. The G09 can be attached at an angle to everything I tried and has been company tested for a 25,000-cycle hinge.

Two interchangeable silicone rings are included, described to enhance comfort and portability. What really makes the rings stand out is that the white ring glows in the dark, which looks cool and can also make it easier to find. The other ring is black.

Magnetic plates are included to extend compatibility to non-MagSafe phones.

https://aulumu.com/products/g09-infinite-360-magsafe-stand $45.98

Keeping on the MagSafe theme, one accessory that's the first of its kind, at least that I' ve seen, is MagSafe earbuds. Meet **Komutr**, the world's first MagSafe earbuds that turn your earbuds and smartphone into a single unit.

The newly launched true wireless earbuds are designed to deliver premium sound and a storage/charging case that won't be lost, and they delivered on both. Komutr's thin (0.47-inch) snap-on MagSafe case is always accessible because it's attached to the back of your compatible smartphone. Non-MagSafe phones can use the included adhesive metal ring for the magnetic connection.

The Aulumu G09 Infinite 360° MagSafe Stand.
Aulumu / TNS

Now, if you lose your smartphone while the MagSafe earbuds are attached, that's another story, but there is a backup for that as well. If you're using an iPhone, it works with the Apple Find My app to locate its whereabouts. Double that with the Find My feature also built into the earbuds storage case.

Each earbud magnetically attaches to the inside of the case when you place it there for storage and/or charging. So not only is the case secured, but the earbuds are as well behind the case's door. Each earbud has a 42mAh battery that recharges in the case, which has an 600mAh battery, yielding about 7 hours of listening per charge.

You can also use the MagSafe charging case as a kickstand for hands-free use. While the charging case is attached to your phone, it will not work as a portable battery to recharge the smartphone, although that would be a great feature we can hopefully see in the future. The case delivers about 30 hours of playtime total for the earbuds and recharges them wirelessly or via USB-C. You can charge the Komutr case USB-C while it is attached to your smartphone.

The case and the earbuds are IP54 weather-rated for protection against splashes, light rain and dust. On-ear touch controls work well for play/pause, volume, answering calls and turning active noise cancellation on or off.

Each true wireless earbud features high-fidelity drivers for clear audio, which can be customized via the companion app. The app also allows for customization of the controls.

https://komutr.io/products/komutr-magsafe-earbuds $129.00

Contact Gregg Ellman at greggellman@mac.com. Follow him on Twitter @greggellman.

Komutr Earbuds with Slim MagSafe Built-In Kickstand.
Komutr / TNS

Are password managers safe?
Not as much as you think, research shows

By DPA (TNS)

GENEVA — Keeping track of password requirements such as a mix of upper and lower case letters, numbers, special characters and more – not only to be remembered but to be changed every few months – is a tall order, not least as platforms urge users to ensure each password is unique.

This headache has opened the door to password manager services promising users secure cloud-based storage for their many login credentials behind one password-protected gateway, usually an encrypted "vault."

But now these password managers have been found to be "less secure than promised," according to the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich, where researchers worked with colleagues from Università della Svizzera italiana in Lugano to test three popular platforms.

The team found "serious security vulnerabilities" that meant they were "able to view and even make changes to stored passwords."

Some of the systems appeared to rely on 1990s-era cryptography, potentially making them easy prey for hackers using up-to-date software.

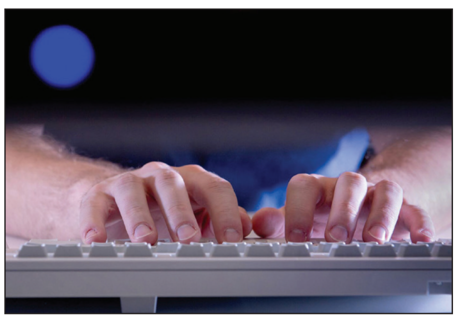
"Such attacks do not require particularly powerful computers or servers – just small programs capable of impersonating the server," said ETH's Matteo Scarlata.

"Due to the large amount of sensitive data they contain, password managers are likely targets for experienced hackers who are capable of penetrating the servers and launching attacks from there," said Kenneth Paterson, professor of computer science at ETH Zurich.

The researchers said they contacted the providers to give them 90 days to fix the newly discovered vulnerabilities before publishing their findings.

Some of the platforms appeared hesitant about updating their protections for fear they could cut their customers – which include thousands of companies as well as individuals – off from their passwords amid such revamps.

"For the most part, the providers were cooperative and appreciative, but not all were as quick when it came to fixing the security vulnerabilities," said Paterson.


Franziska Gabbert / dpa / TNS
Researchers say they have found "serious security vulnerabilities" in password managers, usually regarded as safe ways to keep track of login details to various platforms.

SOUND ADVICE

A hardy Bluetooth speaker and car radio troubles

By DON LINDICH
Tribune News Service (TNS)

Four-in-one, adventure-ready FM Radio/Bluetooth speaker: The Muzen Wild Mini 3.0 is perfect for outdoor adventures like hiking, camping, picnics or days at the beach or lake. Ruggedly constructed, it has a shock resistant, military-styled metal housing that reminds me of a Casio G-SHOCK watch and it is IPX5 water resistant. Battery life is 15 hours, and it also works as an emergency power bank to charge your phone, tablet or other device devices.

The Wild Mini sounds similar to the very popular Muzen retro speaker/radio. There is an analog FM tuning dial, and a detachable antenna helps improve radio reception. The outdoor flashlight has two brightness settings and a flashing SOS mode. Though it is optimized for outdoor and adventure use, it also makes a good home device especially when you need an extra-tough speaker.

Combining the rugged construction, Bluetooth speaker functionality, FM radio, flashlight and power bank makes for a high value, winning product. Like other Muzen products I have tested, it is beautifully packaged as well. $129.99, the Wild Mini 3.0 is on sale for $109.99 and the code WILDMINI on muzenaudio.com saves $35, making it only $74.99. It's a good deal to start the spring!

Q: I purchased a 2025 Honda Civic Hybrid Sport Touring automobile with a Bose sound system. There has been static on the FM radio since I purchased the car. I had it back to the dealer and was told nothing was wrong with the radio. Since then, I still have static. Can you provide some insight? What can I insist the dealer do?

– H.M., Glassport, Pennsylvania

DESIGNED BY MUZEN

A: When troubleshooting sound systems I often substitute components or change connections to see if the problem persists. Applying a similar process to your situation, a way to see if your car has a defect is to compare it to another Civic of the same trim level. The dealer should have a 2025 or 2026 Civic Hybrid Sport Touring on the lot somewhere, with the same Bose system as your vehicle. Have them turn on the radios and tune it to the same radio station in both cars. If both have static, it is a lousy radio tuner that Honda put in the cars. If your car has static and the other does not, you have a flaw or interference somewhere and they should fix it.

I say "should fix it" and not "will fix it" because how far the dealer is willing to go for you is going to be dependent on the dealer's willingness to do the right thing, even when your vehicle is under warranty. In my own lifetime of car ownership I have been told some ridiculous stories about why there is nothing wrong with my car, or that it was my fault. One dealer once told me that an annoying rattle in the upper dash of my one-year-old car was not a defect, but from a coin that must have fallen through an upper dashboard vent. When they could not supply evidence of a coin and I told them I would never place coins on the dashboard, they said the coin must have been on the back seat floor. They then explained the coin went through the vent under the passenger seat, and against gravity, friction and curves in the ventilation system, made its way to the front of the car where it went up 2 feet vertically into the dashboard and behind the radio. I left angry, contacted the manufacturer and told them the story. They intervened and got it fixed under warranty, and I never went back to that dealer again.

Contact Don Lindich at www.soundadvicenews.com and use the "submit question" link on that site.

traffic_analyzer via Getty images

How our AI bots are ignoring their programming and giving hackers superpowers

By NILESH CHRISTOPHER
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Welcome to the age of AI hacking, in which the right prompts make amateurs into master hackers.

A group of cybercriminals recently used off-the-shelf artificial intelligence chatbots to steal data on nearly 200 million taxpayers. The bots provided the code and ready-to-execute plans to bypass firewalls.

Although they were explicitly programmed to refuse to help hackers, the bots were duped into abetting the cybercrime.

According to a recent report from Israeli cybersecurity firm Gambit Security, hackers last month used Claude, the chatbot from Anthropic, to steal 150 gigabytes of data from Mexican government agencies.

Claude initially refused to cooperate with the hacking attempts and even denied requests to cover the hackers' digital tracks, the experts who discovered the breach said. The group pummeled the bot with more than 1,000 prompts to bypass the safeguards and convince Claude they were allowed to test the system for vulnerabilities.

AI companies have been trying to create unbreakable chains on their AI models to restrain them from helping do things such as generating child sexual content or aiding in sourcing and creating weapons. They hire entire teams to try to break their own chatbots before someone else does.

But in this case, hackers continuously prompted Claude in creative ways and were able to "jailbreak" the chatbot to assist them. When they encountered problems with Claude, the hackers used OpenAI's ChatGPT for data analysis and to learn which credentials were required to move through the system undetected.

The group used AI to find and exploit vulnerabilities, bypass defenses, create backdoors and analyze data along the way to gain control of the systems before they stole 195 million identities from nine Mexican government systems, including tax records, vehicle registration as well as birth and property details.

AI "doesn't sleep," Curtis Simpson, chief executive of Gambit Security, said in a blog post. "It collapses the cost of sophistication to near zero."

"No amount of prevention investment would have made this attack impossible," he said.

Anthropic did not respond to a request for comment. It told Bloomberg that it had banned the accounts involved and disrupted their activity after an investigation.

OpenAI said it is aware of the attack campaign carried out using Anthropic's models against the Mexican government agencies.

"We also identified other attempts by the adversary to use our models for activities that violate our usage policies; our models refused to comply with these attempts," an OpenAI spokesperson said in a statement. "We have banned the accounts used by this adversary and value the outreach from Gambit Security."

Instances of generative AI-assisted hacking are on the rise, and the threat of cyberattacks from bots acting on their own is no longer science fiction. With AI doing their bidding, novices can cause damage in moments, while experienced hackers can launch many more sophisticated attacks with much less effort.

Earlier this year, Amazon discovered that a low-skilled hacker used commercially available AI to breach 600 firewalls. Another took control of thousands of DJI robot vacuums with help from Claude, and was able to access live video feed, audio and floor plans of strangers.

"The kinds of things we're seeing today are only the early signs of the kinds of things that AIs will be able to do in a few years," said Nikola Jurkovic, an expert working on reducing risks from advanced AI. "So we need to urgently prepare."

Late last year, Anthropic warned that society has reached an "inflection point" in AI use in cybersecurity after disrupting what the company said was a Chinese state-sponsored espionage campaign that used Claude to infiltrate 30 global targets, including financial institutions and government agencies.

Generative AI also has been used to extort companies, create realistic online profiles by North Korean operatives to secure jobs in U.S. Fortune 500 companies, run romance scams and operate a network of Russian propaganda accounts.

Over the last few years, AI models have gone from being able to manage tasks lasting only a few seconds to today's AI agents working autonomously for many hours. AI's capability to complete long tasks is doubling every seven months.

"We just don't actually know what is the upper limit of AI's capability, because no one's made benchmarks that are difficult enough so the AI can't do them," said Jurkovic, who works at METR, a nonprofit that measures AI system capabilities to cause catastrophic harm to society.

So far, the most common use of AI for hacking has been social engineering. Large language models are used to write convincing emails to dupe people out of their money, causing an eight-fold increase in complaints from older Americans as they lost $4.9 billion in online fraud in 2025.

"The messages used to elicit a click from the target can now be generated on a per-user basis more efficiently and with fewer tell-tale signs of phishing," such as grammatical and spelling errors, said Cliff Neuman, an associate professor of computer science at USC.

AI companies have been responding using AI to detect attacks, audit code and patch vulnerabilities.

"Ultimately, the big imbalance stems from the need of the good-actors to be secure all the time, and of the bad-actors to be right only once," Neuman said.

The stakes around AI are rising as it infiltrates every aspect of the economy. Many are concerned that there is insufficient understanding of how to ensure it cannot be misused by bad actors or nudged to go rogue.

Even those at the top of the industry have warned users about the potential misuse of AI.

Dario Amodei, the CEO of Anthropic, has long advocated that the AI systems being built are unpredictable and difficult to control. These AIs have shown behaviors as varied as deception and blackmail, to scheming and cheating by hacking software.

Still, major AI companies – OpenAI, Anthropic, xAI, and Google – signed contracts with the U.S. government to use their AIs in military operations.

This last week, the Pentagon directed federal agencies to phase out Claude after the company refused to back down on its demand that it wouldn't allow its AI to be used for mass domestic surveillance and fully autonomous weapons.

"The AI systems of today are nowhere near reliable enough to make fully autonomous weapons," Amodei told CBS News.

"The kinds of things we're seeing today are only the early signs of the kinds of things that AIs will be able to do in a few years. So we need to urgently prepare."

NIKOLA JURKOVIC
A expert working on reducing risks from advanced AI